

BUSTER
THE
BIG BROWN BEAR





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"NO YOU WON'T, MR. LOUP, FOR MY MOTHER WILL KILL YOU FIRST"

Twilight Animal Series

BUSTER THE BIG BROWN BEAR

By

GEORGE ETHELBERT WALSH

Author of "Bumper the White Rabbit," "Bumper the White Rabbit in the Woods," "Bumper the White Rabbit and His Foes," "Bumper the White Rabbit and His Friends," "Bobby Gray Squirrel," "Bobby Gray Squirrel's Adventures," Etc.

Colored Illustrations by
EDWIN JOHN PRITTIE



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TWILIGHT ANIMAL SERIES FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

FROM 4 TO 10 YEARS OF AGE

By
GEORGE ETHELBERT WALSH

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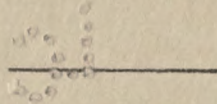
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INTRODUCTION TO THE TWILIGHT ANIMAL STORIES

BY THE AUTHOR

All little boys and girls who love animals should become acquainted with Bumper the white rabbit, with Bobby Gray Squirrel, with Buster the bear, and with White Tail the deer, for they are all a jolly lot, brave and fearless in danger, and so lovable that you won't lay down any one of the books without saying wistfully, "I almost wish I had them really and truly as friends and not just story-book acquaintances." That, of course, is a splendid wish; but none of us could afford to have a big menagerie of wild animals, and that's just what you would have to do if you went outside of the books. Bumper had many friends, such as Mr. Blind Rabbit, Fuzzy Wuzz and Goggle Eyes, his country cousins; and Bobby Gray Squirrel had his near cousins, Stripe the chipmunk and Webb the flying squirrel; while Buster and White Tail were favored with an endless number of friends and relatives. If we turned them all loose from the books, and put them in a ten-acre lot—but

INTRODUCTION

no, ten acres wouldn't be big enough to accommodate them, perhaps not a hundred acres.

So we will leave them just where they are—in the books—and read about them, and let our imaginations take us to them where we can see them playing, skipping, singing, and sometimes fighting, and if we read very carefully, and *think* as we go along, we may come to know them even better than if we went out hunting for them.

Another thing we should remember. By leaving them in the books, hundreds and thousands of other boys and girls can enjoy them, too, sharing with us the pleasures of the imagination, which after all is one of the greatest things in the world. In gathering them together in a real menagerie, we would be selfish both to Bumper, Bobby, Buster, White Tail and their friends as well as to thousands of other little readers who could not share them with us. So these books of Twilight Animal Stories are dedicated to all little boys and girls who love wild animals. All others are forbidden to read them! They wouldn't understand them if they did.

So come out into the woods with me, and let us listen and watch, and I promise you it will be worth while.

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BUSTER THE BIG BROWN BEAR

STORY I

WHEN BUSTER WAS A CUB

In the North Woods where Buster was born, a wide river tinkles merrily over stones that are so white you'd mistake them for snowballs, if you were not careful, and begin pelt-ing each other with them. The birches hanging over the water look like white sticks of peppermint candy, except in the spring of the year when they blossom out in green leaves, and then they make you think of fairyland where everything is painted the colors of the rainbow.

The rocks that slope up from the bank of the river are dented and broken as if some giant in the past had smashed them with his hammer, cracking some and punching deep holes in others. It was in one of these holes, or caves, that Buster was born.

He didn't mind the hard rocky floor of his bed a bit, nor did he mind the darkness, nor the cold winds that swept through the open doorway. He was so well protected by his

thick, furry coat that he didn't need a soft bed on which to take his nap. A big stone made a nice pillow for his head, and he rather liked the hard floor for a bed when he curled up to go to sleep.

Buster was an only child. He didn't know what a brother or sister was like, and so he didn't miss either. He had his mother, who was good enough for him, and when he was old enough to crawl out on the rocks in front of his home he would spend hours and hours there playing with her in the bright sun-shine.

Sometimes Mother Bear had to leave him while she went off in the woods to get something to eat. At such times she made Buster stay in the cave.

"You mustn't show yourself on the rock, Buster," she cautioned, "until you hear me call you. I won't be gone long."

Buster was a dutiful little cub, and he accepted his mother's commands without asking why or wherefore. Perhaps that was because he was too young to understand, or because his mother was very strict with her only child. When he was very young, so young that he could hardly see at all, his mother used to tell him what to do and then gently but firmly make him do it, using her big hairy paws to enforce obedience.

These early lessons were never forgotten, and Buster got in the habit of minding his mother just as naturally as a tree grows straight when trained upright to a stake. But Buster grew curious as he got older, and one day when his mother was going away he asked: "Why can't I play in front until you come back?"

"Because," replied Mother Bear, "Loup the Lynx might come along and eat you up."

"Who is Loup the Lynx?" asked Buster, turning very pale, for he had a wholesome dread of being eaten up.

"Never mind, dear. You stay inside until I come back."

That was a mighty argument of Mother Bear's to make her child obey. He was so afraid of Loup the Lynx that he never dared to poke his nose out of the cave when his mother was away. And sometimes the temptation to do it was very strong, for as he grew bigger and stronger the sunshine had a great fascination for him. Nothing in the world seemed pleasanter than to roll around on the rocks outside, blinking at the warm sun, and smelling the odors of the sweet flowers. It was springtime then, and the woods were full of the song of birds and the drone of busy

insects. It made one wish to be outdoors all the time.

"You must be careful today, Buster," his mother said to him one morning, "and stay inside the cave. I heard Loup the Lynx hunting around here last night. I don't like him. He's a rough, brutal fellow, and nearly always up to some mischief. I hate to leave you a minute today. But I must."

Buster kept his promise, and remained inside all the morning, playing with his tail and the few leaves the wind blew in the cave. Toward noon, however, he got tired of this, and also very hungry. When a bear is hungry, he becomes very bold and will do things that would never occur to him at other times.

Buster sniffed in all the corners of the cave for a bite of something good to eat, but there was nothing more digestible than rocks and stones. Then he crept nearer the entrance, venturing a little closer every moment.

A streak of sunlight played on the rocks in front of him, and it so fascinated him that he began trying to catch it with his little paws. He had it, then lost it, and then sprang for it again. But the sunlight danced around, and never stayed caught.

In the midst of this game of tag with the sunlight, Buster heard a noise outside. It

sounded like some animal scuffling heavily over the rocks, and the little fellow was so sure it was his mother that he ran out to greet her.

But what a surprise met him! Instead of Mother Bear there stood Loup the Lynx, crouching and sniffing, with his long tail swishing back and forth making a noise like a nutmeg grater.

Buster had never seen Loup the Lynx before, but nobody had to tell him now. He recognized him instantly. His first thought was to run back in the dark cave. Loup had a great dread of being caught in the cave by Mother Bear. If he had to fight with a full grown bear he preferred to be out in the open where he could spring in a tree if knocked over by a big paw. So he resorted to cunning to induce Buster to come out further.

"Don't be afraid, Buster," he said pleasantly. "I'm not going to hurt you. Your mother was delayed in the woods, and she sent me here to watch the mouth of the cave so no harm would come to you."

Buster was surprised at this information, and he stopped to look at Loup. He didn't like his face, but if his mother sent him it must be all right.

"I was watching you playing with that sun-beam," Loup continued, lying down with his two paws in front of him. "I used to do that when I was young, but I'm too old now. I can't jump around as I used to. Now let me see if you can catch the sun-beam."

Buster was less afraid than ever, and he wanted to show Loup how spry he was. "I can catch it if I want to," he said boastfully.

"I don't believe you can. Now let's see you do it. If you do I'll tell your mother when she returns what a spry youngster you are."

Buster, swelling with pride and ambition, made a dart for the flickering sun-beam. At the same time Loup leaped into the air, and landed right at the mouth of the cave, with Buster on the outside. He was cut off from retreat, and Loup leered so cruelly at him that a spasm of fear ran down his spine. He wished now that he hadn't disobeyed his mother, but it was too late, and he set up a little cry of terror.

What Loup the Lynx did to him, and how Buster escaped to plunge into more adventures, will be told in the next story.

STORY II

BUSTER AND LOUP

It was a dreadful position for a little roly polly bear to be in, with Loup the Lynx facing him, and his mother away in the woods where she couldn't hear his cries. Loup was so sure of his prize that he let him squeal and cry for some time. It rather amused him.

"What a little howling brat you are!" Loup said finally. "Stop that squealing or I'll make you."

Buster was as much frightened by the tone of the voice as by the words, and almost instantly stopped calling for his mother. He was a very young bear — a mere cub — and you could not blame him for crying for help. Besides he had never been outside of the cave alone before, and right down in his heart he knew that his disobedience of his mother's commands had got him into trouble.

"I'll stop," he said, "if you'll please move away from that doorway and let me go inside. Mother told me not to come out of the cave when she was away."

"Oh, she did!" sneered Loup. "Then you've been a bad, wicked cub, and you deserve to be punished. I think I'll teach you a lesson."

"Please don't, Mr. Loup," pleaded Buster, who much preferred to be punished by his mother than this wicked looking animal. "One punishment will be enough, and I know mother will attend to that."

Loup laughed and swished his short tail as if he wished it were longer so he might use it as a whip to punish Buster with.

"No, I'll punish you too," he added. "You deserve it. Do you know how I punish cubs that disobey their mothers?"

Buster didn't know, and wasn't particularly anxious to find out. His one desire was to get back of Loup and escape in the cave where he might be able to hide until his mother returned. If he could only get Loup away from the front of the cave, he might run in it.

"Well, I'll tell you," Loup added. "I take them by the scruff of the neck, and shake them until they haven't breath enough to squeal."

He grabbed a stone in his jaws and shook it back and forth just to show how he would do it. The sight made Buster feel faint.

"And then," went on Loup, "I give them a pat on the back with my paw like this."

Loup raised a paw and brought it down on the rock so hard that it made Buster jump a foot in the air. The blow was so powerful that it seemed for a moment as if it would crack the rocks. Loup laughed joyfully at Buster's fright.

"Now that I've shown you what I intend to do with you," Loup continued, "you'll be prepared. Well, I'm coming now to punish you."

Buster backed away to the edge of the rock.

"And when I've cuffed your ears, and shaken out your teeth," Loup threatened, "I'm going to eat you. Oh, yes, a young cub makes delicious eating. I'll fill my stomach with you."

For the first time Buster showed a little spirit of defiance. Standing up on his two hind legs, he said, wagging his head: "No you won't, Mr. Loup, for my mother will kill you first. She's bigger than you, and she can strike harder than you. My, when she brings her big paw down it makes the rocks shake! If you touch me she'll strike you on the head, and knock you in the river."

"Huh!" snorted Loup angrily. The fact was he was afraid of Mother Bear, but he didn't want Buster to know it, and he tried to make him think so by boasting. "If your

mother should come near me, I'd knock her over. I could do it easily."

Perhaps Buster wasn't convinced by this boastful talk, or may be he heard something in the bushes that sounded like his mother's familiar footsteps. At any rate, he turned suddenly, and clapped his paws.

"Now let me see you do it, Mr. Loup!" he cried. "Here comes mother! She won't let you hurt me!"

The way Loup jumped and growled showed that his courage wasn't so very great after all. He had no desire to meet Mother Bear, and the thought he had lost a delicious dinner by talking so long to Buster made him hungry. For a moment he hesitated. If he jumped on Buster and ran away with him, Mother Bear would be on his tracks immediately, and if he stayed he would be cornered in the cave. He decided to take the safest course.

"Well, if your mother's coming, Buster," he said in a changed voice, "it won't be necessary for me to stay here with you any longer. You might tell her I kept guard over the cave while she was away."

Buster was so surprised by these words that he turned to look at the Lynx. Loup smiled at him, and added: "Of course, you know this was all a joke. I didn't intend to hurt

you. I love little bear cubs. That's why I came here to protect you. We'll always be great friends, and when you grow up I'll show you the ways of the woods."

Buster in his innocence believed these soft words, and his feelings toward Loup took a sudden change. He wasn't wise enough to follow up his advantage and let Loup go. Instead he said:

"Don't go yet, Mr. Loup. I'm not sure mother is coming after all. The noise in the bushes was just a bird scratching for worms."

Loup raised his ugly head and glanced around him. His ears were cocked up so that he could catch the faintest sound in the distance. Then a smile of satisfaction spread over his face. Turning to Buster he let out a roar that sounded like distant thunder rumbling in the sky. It made Buster jump nearly two feet in the air.

"So you were trying to deceive me!" he growled. "You lied to me! You said your mother was coming when she wasn't. Then for that I'll kill you and eat you up!"

Buster started to protest. "No, no, Mr. Loup, I didn't lie to you," he stammered.

But he couldn't get any further. Loup had crouched for a spring. Buster saw his big, dark body coming through the air at him, and

very naturally he ran away crying with fright. Loup seeing that he had missed him in his spring struck viciously with one paw, and just grazed Buster's head. It was only a graze, but it drew blood, and made Buster whimper with pain.

There was one thing Buster wanted, and that was to get safely inside the cave, and the moment Loup sprang in the air he started for it. But Loup was a quick, powerful dodger, and before the cub could reach the entrance the Lynx had taken another long jump and landed directly in front of him.

Buster, to escape him, wheeled so suddenly that he rolled all over in a heap. The rock sloped down toward the water, and the cub rolled down it so fast that Loup was unable to catch him. It was the only thing that saved Buster's life.

He had never been in the river, and he didn't know whether he could swim or not, but he much preferred the water to Loup's dripping jaws. So instead of trying to check his rolling he kicked out to make himself go faster.

Loup reached him just as he got at the edge of the rocks, and with one paw tried to crush his head and body; but again he missed him, and merely cut a deep gash in Buster's shoulder. The next moment the cub splashed

into the river, and went down, down, down until it seemed to him there was no bottom.

In the next story you will hear of how Buster was rescued from the river.

STORY III

HOW BUSTER GOT OUT OF THE RIVER

Buster had never been in water over his head before, and you can imagine his feelings when it got in his eyes, mouth, ears and nose. He coughed and kicked, and made a great splutter, but after all it was more fright than real danger. He was such a fat little cub that he couldn't sink to the bottom, and stay there.

Just when he thought his end had surely come, he bobbed up on the surface, and his head came out of the water. What a wonderful thing it was to inhale pure fresh air again! Buster had never realized how good it was until then! Of course he had always breathed all the air he wanted, and so having enough he didn't know what it meant to be without it for even a few seconds. That's the way with a lot of things we have in this world.

Buster inhaled the air in great gulps, filling his lungs until they swelled up like balloons, and then to his horror he felt himself sinking. The mere thought of going down in the water

again terrified him. He let out a squeal of fear, and began splashing with all four paws.

That was the best thing he could do, for a bear can swim without any lessons if he must do it to save his life. But it was a laughable sight to Loup the Lynx watching from the shore. Buster's swimming was clumsy and awkward.

"Ha! Ha!" laughed Loup gleefully. "Wag your tail, Buster, and maybe that will help you! Don't sneeze now, or you'll swallow all the water in the river. That's right, keep going around in a circle."

It was cruel of Loup to poke fun at him, and Buster thought so too, but he was so occupied in trying to keep his head above the surface he didn't have time to answer.

"Come toward the shore, Buster, and I'll help you," Loup called finally, running down to the edge, and wading knee-deep in the river.

This was the first kindly offer of the Lynx, and once more Buster began to think Loup was not so wicked after all, but when he had made his way a few feet toward the shore he stopped. Why was Loup so anxious to save him? Of course, there was only one explanation to it. He wanted to eat him up.

Buster turned suddenly and splashed away from the bank. Much as he dreaded death

by drowning, he preferred it to being eaten up by Loup.

"This way, Buster! This way!" called Loup, thinking that the cub had got turned around and didn't know which way he was swimming.

Buster made no reply. He saw the opposite shore ahead. It was a long distance away, but he was going to swim for it. He began splashing harder than ever.

"I tell you to swim this way!" added Loup, growing suspicious and angry.

Buster continued to head in the opposite direction.

"If you don't come this way," angrily cried Loup, "I'll come after you, and hold your head under the water until you're dead."

Buster more frightened than ever paddled desperately, and he was really making pretty good time. He was beginning to learn how to swim. The opposite bank was growing nearer every moment. To his surprise he found that his strength was not leaving him, and he could keep his head up better than before. There was a chance of escaping the Lynx.

"You little brat!" shrieked Loup, dancing around in the shallow water. "I'll teach you to trick me!"

Loup was an excellent swimmer, but he didn't like the water. He hated to get his soft fur wet, for it took a long time to dry it in the sun. He never took a swim unless forced to it either to catch his victim or to save his life.

But this was one of those occasions when he had to swim or lose his prey. Buster was surely escaping him. In a few more minutes he would be on the opposite shore where he could hide in the bushes until his mother returned.

"All right!" added Loup finally, making up his mind. "I'm coming for you!"

These words didn't frighten Buster nearly so much as the terrible splash he heard a moment later behind him. It seemed as if the river rose a foot, and that big waves were dashing against the bank. Loup had run up a tree leaning over the edge of the river, and launched himself from it. When his body struck the water it made a loud noise.

Buster made a frantic effort to increase his speed, but once when he glanced over his shoulder he nearly lost heart. Loup was swimming with great powerful strokes which brought him closer every second. He didn't splash and flounder around in the water as the cub did, but, with all except his ugly head

and long tail under the surface, he moved forward with the least amount of friction. Loup swam as steadily and easily as a boat propelled by a screw.

Buster grew frantic with dread. He expected any moment to feel Loup's powerful paw crushing down on his head, for right behind him he could hear the deep breathing of the Lynx. There was no hope — no escape!

"Thought you'd get away from me, Buster, didn't you?" laughed Loup when within a few yards of the cub. "Ha! Ha! This is delicious sport! Now I'm going to duck you and half drown you, and then duck you again."

"Oh, please, please —" gasped Buster, who was pretty well winded now. "Please let me go!"

For reply Loup laughed louder than ever. Then Buster thought of a trick. This time he made it up, for he had heard nothing in the bushes to make him think his mother was returning. But under the circumstances you can't blame him for stretching the truth.

"Oh, Loup, there's mother coming!" he cried. "I must go to her at once!"

Loup was not deceived this time. He took a cautious peep around him, and then splashed the water violently with his two front paws.

"You can't deceive me that way the second time, Buster," he said. "Your mother isn't coming. I'm going to kill you, and then take you up on the bank and eat you."

"But, Mr. Loup, I haven't done anything to you. Won't you let me go this time? I'll promise to be your friend, and —"

"No!" roared the Lynx so loudly that the echo went ringing up and down the river.

He raised a great paw to grasp Buster, who to escape it dove under the water and disappeared for an instant; but he couldn't stay there long, and when he reappeared there was the menacing paw raised to strike him.

Loup really liked to torture his victims. It wasn't his nature to kill them outright. It gave him great pleasure to see them suffer. If he had struck at Buster at once, he might have killed him in one blow; but he didn't, and that was what saved the little bear's life. There was rescue at hand which neither one dreamed of.

There was a sudden splash in the water, and then a dull thud as something hard and heavy struck Loup on the nose. He jumped back with a scream of rage. At first he thought Buster had played a trick on him, but when another heavy thing hit him on the back of the head he knew differently.

From the shore there came excited cries. "Hit him again! Let me try him this time!"

Loup glanced that way, and understood instantly. Two men were standing on the shore pelting him with rocks. Two of them had hit him, and others were coming his way. There was no fight in Loup when caught in the water, and with a scream of rage he turned and swam for the opposite bank. He wasn't going to risk the loss of his life for the sake of a good dinner.

The next story will tell how Buster met the men, and was carried away as a captive.

STORY IV

BUSTER IS CARRIED AWAY BY THE MEN

Buster was nearly as much surprised as Loup by the sudden appearance of the men, but he lacked the strength to turn and swim back to the other side of the river. Indeed, between fear and his hard struggle he was almost ready to give up and sink. He felt he couldn't take many more strokes even to save his life.

At first he thought the rocks were being hurled at him, but as they followed Loup half way across the river, the men throwing them until the Lynx was out of reach, he concluded that maybe he was safer on that side with the men than on the other with his old enemy. This belief was strengthened when the men stopped bombarding the Lynx, and turned to Buster.

"It's a young bear!" said one of the men.

"Sure! I told you so before. We must save him. Here, little fellow! Come here! We won't hurt you!"

Buster looked at them with eyes that seemed ready to pop out of his head. He was so thankful that the men were not going to hurt him that he swam straight toward them. One ran out to meet him, and caught him in his arms.

"The poor little fellow's hurt," the man said, noticing the blood on Buster's shoulder where Loup's claw had caught him when he first tumbled in the river.

"I wish we had a gun to shoot that Lynx," remarked the other. "I'll come back and lay for him."

The man holding Buster stroked his head and back, as he carried him up on dry land. "The poor little fellow's tired out and half dead with fright," he added.

"And hungry, too," said the second man. "We must find him some warm milk. Got any in the camp?"

"Nothing but condensed milk."

"Well, we'll try him with that."

They carried Buster up to their camp in the woods, and brought out a can of condensed milk. After warming some of this over the fire, they gave it to Buster.

Nothing ever tasted so good as that milk, for Buster was cold, tired and still trembling from fright and weakness. He didn't know

it until then, but he was dreadfully hungry, so hungry that he couldn't stop until he had lapped up the last drop.

The two men watched him in silence, and then patted him on the back. "You were hungry, little chap, weren't you?" remarked one. "Well, that's enough for the present. We don't want to make you sick."

"Oh, give him a bit of this honey-comb for dessert. That won't hurt him."

And then to Buster's delight, the man handed him something, the very odor of which sent the blood tingling through his veins. One taste of it, and Buster was in ecstasy. It was his first taste of honey, and the grunt of pleasure that escaped his lips sent the men into a roar of laughter.

"The little chap's having the time of his life," one laughed. "Like Oliver Twist he'll be begging for more when that's gone." Of course, Buster didn't know anything about Oliver Twist, but he did know that he could eat that delicious honey all day, and when the last drop was gone he did beg for more.

"Stand on your hind legs and ask for it, and I'll give it to you," said the man.

Buster didn't know exactly what he meant, but it was much easier to reach up to the hand

containing the honey when he stood on two legs, and he unconsciously obeyed.

"Now ask for it."

Buster opened his mouth and snapped at it, but the hand was raised beyond his reach. Then, disappointed, he uttered a little cry of eagerness. To his surprise the man gave him the honey.

"That's right," he laughed. Then turning to his companion, he added: "I'm going to teach him tricks, Jim. You can teach a young cub almost anything if you begin early enough."

All this was strange talk to Buster, but he had learned the first lesson of his new life — the trick of begging. After that when he wanted milk or honey or anything else, he stood up on his hind legs and grunted or cried for it. He found that he always got what he wanted in this way.

With his little stomach full of rich milk and sweet honey, Buster grew very sleepy, and when he curled up to rest one of his rescuers spread a warm blanket over him. In a few minutes he was lost in slumberland.

When Buster awoke he had a queer sensation of being carried in a hammock or something equally soft and comfortable. It was so different from his hard bed on the rocks! His



HE STOOD ON HIS HIND LEGS AND CRIED FOR IT

first thought was that it was all part of a dream, but remembering his experience with Loup the Lynx he shuddered, and set up a call for his mother. He was frightened, and whimpered so loudly that the man carrying him opened the blanket and peeked in.

"What is it, Buster?" he asked, addressing him by the very name his mother had always called him. "Hungry again?"

Buster was indeed hungry again, but he was also homesick and wanted his mother. He kept on whimpering when the man took him out of the blanket and patted him.

"Oh, give him something to eat, Bill, and stop his crying," said the man's companion.

So they stopped long enough to feed him again, and after that Buster felt less homesick, and, it must be confessed, forgot his mother. The men began playing with him, and Buster rolled over and gnawed at a stick for them until they roared with laughter.

"Do you know, Jim," said one of his captors, "we've got a rich prize in that cub. He's the most intelligent little chap I ever saw. I wonder where he came from."

"Probably his mother was killed, and that Lynx knew it, and was trying to make a dinner off him."

"I'd like to get a crack at that lynx some day."

"So would I. But I'm mighty glad we saved the cub. He'll make a fine pet. He's as playful as a dog."

Buster was a little startled to hear that his mother had probably been killed. That would account for her not returning to the cave when he called her. Had Loup killed her? No, Buster didn't think so, for his mother was big and powerful, and could easily knock a lynx over with one blow from her paw. Then who was her murderer, or wasn't she dead?

These questions were too hard for Buster to answer, and he soon stopped trying to think of them. Meanwhile, he was safe and well fed, and his two captors liked him. Why should he worry about something that couldn't be helped?

At night time the men came to a cabin near the edge of the woods, and Buster was given a warm blanket in one corner of it. He watched them cook their evening meal, and ate whatever they fed him. The bacon sizzling in the frying pan smelt so good that Buster poked his nose in it, and then drew back with a howl of pain. It burnt his little nose and brought the tears to his eyes.

"Let that be a lesson, Buster, not to poke your nose in things that don't belong to you," laughed one of the men. Then he handed him a piece of bacon well cooked, and not too hot. Buster swallowed it in one gulp.

"What are you going to do with the little fellow, Jim?" suddenly asked one of the men. "You know we can't keep him in the city."

"I've thought of that," replied the other slowly. "The only thing we can do is to sell him. He ought to be worth something."

This was the first hint to Buster that he wasn't always going to live with his captors, and it made him very sad. When bears were sold, what became of them? Buster didn't know, and he went to sleep very troubled. But he wasn't sold after all, and in the next story you will hear how he was stolen.

STORY V

HOW BUSTER WAS STOLEN

Buster remained three whole days in the camp with the two men who had saved him from Loup the Lynx, and during that time he learned many things that his mother had never taught him. For one thing he learned manners.

One day he stuck his nose in the pot of soup on the table and began licking it up until a hand grasped him by the neck, and jerked him back. "Buster, you've got to learn your manners, and the time to begin is when you're young," said the man who held him. "Now I must punish you so you'll never stick your nose in the soup again without remembering it."

With that two sharp blows from a small stick landed on Buster's nose. He yelped with pain, and tried to run away, but his captor held him. "The next time you will get three blows instead of two," he added gravely. Buster never repeated the offence.

For another thing he learned it paid to be

obliging. When the men asked him to jump over a stick or dance on his hind legs, he received a double lump of sugar if he promptly obeyed. A little extra dance, or a new kind of trick, always brought something to reward him. Buster was shrewd enough to connect the two together — the trick and the reward.

But there was one thing he hadn't learned, and it got him in trouble again just as it did that day when he disobeyed his mother in leaving the cave when she was away. The men had to go away for a few hours, and they shut Buster up in the cabin, with the remark:

"You stay in here, Buster, and watch the camp. We'll be back soon."

"Better close that window, Jim," remarked the other. "He might climb up to it and get out."

"No, it will be too hot in here. Besides, I think we can trust Buster. He won't try to get out."

Of course, when they left Buster had no intention of disobeying. He was satisfied to curl up in a corner of the cabin and sleep until they returned; but they were gone for a long time, and late in the afternoon he got very restless.

"I'll climb up there and look out," he said

to himself, glancing up at the window. "They didn't tell me not to do that."

To reach the window he had to climb up on the stout table, and jump from that to the broad window-sill. This feat wasn't so difficult, for Buster had learned to use his claws with great skill in climbing. The jump to the window-sill was a short one, but he nearly missed it, and had to scramble desperately to prevent a fall.

Once on the window-sill, however, he was well repaid for his trouble. It was a beautiful day outside, and the woods smelt so sweet and attractive that Buster felt a strange longing to get out there and roll around among the leaves. But he wasn't going to do it. No, he remembered the words of his captors, and while he had made no promise he intended to obey them.

Just the same when Groundy the Woodchuck came along and cast a long shadow in front of the window, Buster leaned so far out that he nearly lost his balance. Groundy glanced up, and at first was startled and ready to run; but when he saw that Buster was no more than a cub, only a little larger than himself, he stopped and spoke to him.

"What are you doing up there?" he asked. "You don't live in that house, do you? If

you don't look out the owners will come along and catch you."

"They've caught me already," replied Buster. "That's why I'm here, Groundy."

"Oh, then you're a prisoner!" sighed Groundy. "I'm sorry for you. Are you tied by a chain?"

"Indeed, I'm not! They don't chain me up. I'm not a prisoner, either."

Groundy looked at him in silence, not quite able to understand. Buster was grinning at him as if he enjoyed his perplexity. Finally, Groundy said:

"I can't believe you, Buster. But there's one way to show me. If you're not a prisoner, tied by a chain, climb down here. Then I'll believe you."

"I can't —" began Buster, and then stopped. Of course, if he said that Groundy would go away convinced that he was actually chained inside the window.

"I thought so," nodded Groundy. "Well, I'm sorry for you. I must be going now."

"Wait a minute!" called Buster. "I'll climb down just to show you, but I can't stay."

It really wouldn't do any harm, he thought, to climb down and right back again to show Groundy that he was free. He would do it so quickly that he would be back in the cabin

again before any one saw him. Groundy was waiting for him, and Buster couldn't disappoint him now.

He dropped easily to the ground under the window, and cried: "How was that for a jump, Groundy! You couldn't do better, could you?"

"No, but the thing that puzzles me is, how are you going to get back again? Anybody can jump down a hill, but not many can jump up it. Can you jump back to the window-sill?"

Buster had not given much thought to this. He looked up, and the window was so high above his head he knew that he could never jump half the way.

"I don't know," he stammered. "But maybe I can climb back. I've got good claws, and I can climb a tree."

"That may be, Buster, but you can't climb the side of a house," replied Groundy. "If you can I'll watch you."

Groundy squatted down, and Buster anxious to show how well he could climb started to go up the side of the house; but a bear hugs a tree when climbing it, and Buster couldn't get his paws around the cabin any more than he could fly to the moon. He made several attempts to dig his claws in the

logs to pull himself up, but each time he tumbled back to the ground before he could reach half way. But he wasn't going to give up trying right away, and again and again he made the attempt until completely exhausted.

"You can't do it, Buster," remarked Groundy finally, rising to his feet. "I knew you couldn't. It's easier to roll down a hill than roll up it."

Buster was greatly disappointed, and he looked around to find something that he could roll under the window and climb up that way; but a noise in the woods suddenly startled Groundy.

"Someone's coming," he whispered. "I must be going. Better come with me, Buster."

"No," was the reply. "I live here now, and I won't run away just because I disobeyed and got in trouble."

Perhaps it would have been better for him had he accepted Groundy's invitation; but he didn't know that, and it was to his credit that he stayed. He knew that he had done wrong in climbing out of the window, but two wrongs don't make a right, and Buster decided that he would face his masters and let them punish him if they wanted to.

But he received a severe shock the next minute. A stranger appeared around the side of the cabin, and another on the other side. They were not pleasant looking. They were very unlike the two men who had rescued him from the river.

"Head him off!" shouted one. "Don't let him get away!"

Buster was too surprised and frightened to run, and before he knew it he was caught by four stout arms and something thick and blinding was thrown over his head. He grunted and squealed, but nobody seemed to hear him. He was picked up and carried swiftly away in the woods and for a long time he was jounced and pounded about in a thick blanket that completely covered him.

When he finally got a peek of daylight again, he was in a strange place, with two evil-looking faces bending over him. In the next story you will hear about Buster's new masters.

STORY VI

BUSTER'S CRUEL MASTERS

Buster was so enraged at the treatment he had received that the moment one of the men touched him he growled and snapped at the hand. He had nearly suffocated in the blanket, and all the way through the woods he had been bounced and jounced around cruelly. His captors had seemed to take delight in tormenting him.

So you cannot exactly blame him for being very angry when one of the men poked him in the ribs with a hand. The hand was quickly withdrawn the moment Buster snapped at it.

"The little beast," snarled the owner of the hand. "I'll teach him to bite!"

Before Buster knew what was coming, he was slapped over the head with a stout stick. It stunned him for a moment, and he lay very quiet. But when he got back his senses, he showed his teeth again and sprang for the man.

This time he was knocked over and kicked about the room until he ached in every bone.

His two captors came for him with short, stout sticks, which they used freely. Again and again Buster sprang at them, and tried to bite them, but each time he was knocked down.

You see, Buster was only a cub, and he was no match for two full grown men, but he had the spirit of his wild ancestors in him, and he fought until he was hardly able to stand up. Then he dropped down sullen and resentful, beaten into silence, but with his spirit still flaming with anger.

From that day began a new life for Buster. He was no longer treated kindly and coaxed to do tricks. Every time he failed to do what his captors demanded of him he was kicked and cuffed about, and when he obeyed them he was not rewarded by any sugar or honey.

Indeed, he never tasted either of these sweet things. What he had to eat were scraps of bread or meat which the men threw to him after they had eaten all they wanted. Instead of having the freedom of a cabin, he was kept chained up in a small, dark hut.

And what a hut it was! It was dirty and smelly, with scarcely any sun or daylight in it. At night time the men lighted a dirty old lamp or a smelly candle which spluttered and dripped without giving much light. His bed

was the bare, hard floor, with nothing for a covering except a few wisps of straw.

Buster rebelled at all this treatment. He couldn't get used to it. The men never spoke a kind word to him, nor ever patted him on the back in a friendly way. They whipped him for the slightest thing, and made him so afraid of them that finally he ran whenever one of them approached.

But even this wasn't the worst of his captivity. In a short time his captors began to teach him to dance and do tricks, but not in the gentle way his former friends did. They put a muzzle on his nose so he could not bite any one, and tied a chain to his neck. Then with a long pole, one end of which was sharpened, they prodded him into dancing. If he didn't dance fast enough to suit them they jabbed him with the sharp pole, and sometimes when he was so tired he could hardly stand they made him stand on his head and turn a somersault.

As a reward for all this Buster was given a few dry crusts of bread and a drink of water, but never any honey or sugar. At night time, sore and tired, he would curl up in the corner of his room, and think of the past. With tears in his eyes, he thought of his happy home in the cave, of his mother who was so kind to

him, of Loup the Lynx, and of the two men who had saved him from the river, and fed him with rich milk and sugar and honey.

Oh, how he wished he was back with them or at home in the cave with his mother! But wishing wouldn't help him, and after a while he began planning a way to escape. He decided to be good, and obey his cruel masters, but the first chance he had he would run away from them.

After that Buster became a model bear. He tried to please his masters, not because he liked them, but because he was waiting for the chance to run away. He was really a very bright bear, and within a couple of months he could do many tricks and stunts. He was given a tin cup, which he was taught to hold out to people, and when pennies were placed in it he bowed and carried them to the man with the pole.

One day he was taken out on the streets, and was led along until they came to some children playing. One of his masters played a wheezy old organ, while the other shook the chain and told Buster to dance.

Now dancing out in the fresh air, with children watching him and clapping their hands, was very much pleasanter than in his dirty room, and Buster enjoyed it. He danced as he

never did before, and when the man holding the chain told him to stand on his head and turn a somersault he obeyed promptly.

There was a clapping of hands, and a shout of pleasure came from all sides. Buster got to his feet, bowed, and repeated the performance. Then a little girl, holding the hand of a gentleman, approached Buster and handed him a stick of candy.

It was time for him to pass the tin cup for pennies, but Buster was so pleased with the little girl's attention, and so hungry for something sweet, that he forgot his duties and took the candy. But before he could put it in his mouth the man with the chain jerked him back and prodded him with the sharp pole.

Buster grunted with pain and hurriedly picked up the tin cup. A shout of anger went up from the crowd, and the gentleman holding the little girl's hand spoke sharply to Buster's master. Then he picked up the stick of candy and handed it to Buster, who took it and tucked it in his mouth. How sweet and delicious it tasted! It made him think of the days when he was kept in the cabin with the two campers who had rescued him from the river.

Once more there came a jerk on the chain, and the pole prodded him in the side. He

had forgotten to pass the tin cup for pennies. The candy had made him forget his duties.

Now it was not Buster's fault that the crowd didn't fill his cup with pennies. Indeed, it was because they knew the money was to go to the two men and not to Buster that the people refused to pay.

"They don't deserve anything!" somebody said. "They're cruel to the poor creature! Don't give them anything!"

Buster made a complete circle of the double row of men, women and children, but not a penny was dropped in his cup. When he returned, finally, and handed the empty cup to his master he was greeted by an angry cuff. There was an angry growl from the people, and the men fearing trouble led Buster away, jerking him hard with the chain.

But that wasn't the last of his punishment. That night when he got home Buster was sent to bed without even his crust of bread. The men were angry because he hadn't collected many pennies for them, and like many other people in this world they laid all the blame of their failure upon another. Buster was the scape-goat.

In the middle of the night, Buster thought of the little girl who had given him the stick of candy, and groaning with pain and hunger

he made up his mind to run away very soon and find the girl if he had to travel half around the world. She would at least be kind to him, and that was all he wanted. On the very morrow he would plan a way to get out of the hut and begin his search for the girl with brown eyes and dimples in her cheek.

Buster gets away in the next story, but he joined a circus instead of finding the little girl who had been kind to him.

STORY VII

BUSTER MAKES HIS ESCAPE

Buster had been growing rapidly all this time, and instead of being a little cub he was nearly as tall as his mother and as broad as a Newfoundland dog. A few months had made a tremendous difference in his size and strength.

But he was hardly aware of this change. He still thought of himself as a little bear, but had Loup the Lynx seen him now it is doubtful if he would have been so free to attack him. Loup had a wholesome respect for a full grown bear. It was only the young cubs that he liked to tackle and eat.

But if Buster wasn't aware of his growing size and strength his two captors were. That was why they kept him chained up at night and always carried a long pointed pole when they took him out on the street. They were afraid that some day Buster would realize his strength, and then all would be up with their control of him.

The day came, however, when Buster suddenly found that his muscles were powerful and his strength greater than that of his masters. They had been traveling all day from one small town to another, gathering in a few pennies here and there, and resting by the way-side whenever opportunity offered. It was a hot day, and the road was dusty and rough.

When they came to a small brook the sight of the cool, sweet water brought to Buster's mind pictures of the broad river that ran in front of the cave where he was born. A great desire to plunge in the stream and wallow in the cool water seized him. With this idea in mind he quickened his pace, and started down the embankment.

A sudden jerk of the chain around his neck brought him to his senses, but with an angry toss of the head he continued on, dragging the man behind him. In vain the man tugged at the chain, shouting to his companion, who came up and began prodding Buster with the sharp end of the long pole.

But Buster wanted to get in the brook. Nothing in all his life had ever appealed so much to him. The dust and dirt in his mouth, ears and nose irritated him. Instead of stop-

ping he slapped at the pole and continued on his way.

Then something happened that aroused him to fury. The man gave him such a vicious jab with the sharpened pole that it made him grunt and squeal. Heretofore such cruel treatment had always cowered Buster, but it had an opposite effect on him now. It aroused his fury.

With a quick, lightening-like stroke he grasped the pole in his two paws, and before either of his captors could recover from their surprise he snapped it in two. It was all done so quickly that even Buster was surprised.

Seeing the instrument of his torture lying broken on the ground, Buster smiled, and leered at the men. Something in their eyes attracted his attention. It was fear! Buster read it as clearly as if it had been printed there in large letters.

His captors were afraid of him! They had lost their pointed pole, and thus disarmed they were no longer able to torment. Buster was the master of the situation. A great feeling of exultation swelled up in him. His eyes gleamed and flashed.

Then with a roar he turned on the one holding the chain and struck savagely at him. What happened filled Buster with glee. The

man dropped the chain and fled with cries of fright. Buster pursued a few yards, and then sat down on his haunches and laughed.

"Ho! Ho! They're afraid of me!" he said. "I won't have to be their slave any more! All I've got to do is to growl at them, and strike them!"

He got up and strutted around. He was a free bear once more. Never more would he be a captive. He waddled down to the brook and plunged into the cool water. He washed and drank and gurgled to his heart's content. Once or twice his captors approached, and tried to coax him out, but he turned on them with a snarl and made them run away again.

Then they disappeared entirely, and Buster was left alone to enjoy his bath. But his freedom wasn't to last for long, although he didn't know it at the time.

Now as it happened there was a circus in the town a few miles back, and his two masters who cared more about the money value of Buster than anything else, decided that it was a good chance to make a bargain. They knew that they would never be able to control their half-grown bear once he had discovered his strength and power. He was henceforth useless for their work.

But a circus was different. Buster would be valuable in the circus either as a trick animal or as a dangerous man-eating creature that had to be kept caged all the time. People would pay money to view a bear that no man could tame. Of course, Buster was no such wild animal, and he had no intention of killing any one, but the fact that he had broken away from captivity and refused to be captured again furnished the foundation for a story that he was a wild, desperate animal that could not be tamed.

Buster was lying on the grass near the brook, enjoying a quiet snooze, when he was startled by the appearance of half a dozen men armed with sticks and pitchforks. He raised his head and looked mildly at them. Behind walked the two men who had cruelly tormented him.

"There he is!" shouted one. "Look out for him, or he'll jump on you!"

Buster growled when he heard that familiar voice, and rose on his two hind legs to face the approaching crowd. Some of them stopped and refused to go any further; but two or three approached warily. They were armed with clubs and pitchforks, but one of them carried a long rope looped over an arm. Buster didn't know what this was for, and he

turned his attention to the men with the clubs.

He growled and stepped toward them. They retreated a few steps — all except the man with the rope. He seemed cool and unafraid. Buster eyed him curiously when he raised an arm and twirled the rope over his head. He even watched the rope circle in the air and come toward him.

It was not until the rope looped over his head and settled on his shoulders that he understood; but it was too late then. The man jerked it, and Buster felt something around his neck that choked him almost to death. He tore at it with his paws, but before he could rip it off another from behind caught him.

Buster fought fiercely for a few moments, but when the men armed with pointed sticks and clubs ran in and began prodding him sharply every time he tore at the rope he began to grow afraid again. He was no match for all these men, especially when his neck was being squeezed so that he could barely draw a decent breath.

When he quieted down, the men stopped prodding him, and Buster soon found that it didn't pay to fight against such heavy odds. Only when his former captors came near him did he growl and show signs of anger.

Buster was led back a few miles and placed in a cage with iron bars. There was plenty of food and water in the cage, and he was glad to get inside with the ropes off his neck. Buster had joined the circus!

But would his new life be happier than the old? Had he jumped from the frying-pan into the fire, or were there days ahead when he could enjoy life once more without the fear of being beaten for every little mistake? He didn't know, but he slept soundly and peacefully that night even if he was a prisoner in an iron cage.

What happened to him in the circus will form part of the next story, called **Buster's First Public Appearance.**

STORY VIII

BUSTER'S FIRST PUBLIC APPEARANCE

The cage in which Buster was kept was rather small, but it was clean and fresh, with plenty of straw on the bottom, and a blanket stretched on one side to shield him from the draft. There were other cages in the place, and after the first night he began to get acquainted with their occupants.

On his right there was an old Lion, who had lost most of his teeth and much of his hair. He snored so loudly the first night that Buster was twice awakened by what he thought was the roll of thunder. When morning dawned he asked the Old Lion if he always snored like that.

"Yes, when I'm asleep, but when I'm awake I snore like this."

To Buster's surprise he opened his mouth and let out a roar that shook the whole place and started every animal crying and snarling. Spot the Leopard, who was caged on Buster's left, growled and spit ferociously as he sprang from one side of his cage to the other. But

the Old Lion sat back on his haunches and roared with laughter.

"What did you do that for?" asked Buster, when the wild commotion began to subside.

"Just to show you how I snore in the day time," was the retort. "You want to hear it again?"

"No, thank you, once is enough."

"Well, if you say so, I won't," replied the Old Lion. "But after you've been here a long time you'll be glad to hear me roar. It breaks up the monotony. There's nothing else to do, you know, and it gets dreadfully tiresome doing nothing. Heigh-o! it's a dull life!"

He yawned and stretched himself. Spot the Leopard on the other side stopped his snarling, and glanced between his bars at Buster. He was interested in this new-comer, and he continued to stare so long that Buster finally smiled back at him and nodded his head.

"How did they catch you?" Spot asked suddenly.

"With a rope," replied Buster. "I wasn't expecting it, and they dropped it over my head before I could run."

Spot spit and snarled again to show his temper. "They caught me when I was a cub,"

he said. "They wouldn't have caught me if I was full grown. They're afraid of me now. Every time my trainer comes in I snarl and snap at her. She snaps the whip in my face, and I pretend to be afraid of it. But I'm not! I'm just waiting my chance. Some day I'll pounce on her, and then —"

He swished his long tail and licked his lips, while his eyes glowed balefully.

"What sort of a trainer have you?" asked Buster. "Is she good to you?"

"There she comes now," whispered Spot. "You can see for yourself."

Buster turned and saw a young woman, dressed in a dazzling, sparkling costume of many colors, with a small cap surmounting her golden hair, and a thick, rawhide whip in her hand. There was a fearless look in the dark eyes, and when she strode up to Buster's cage she surveyed him quite calmly. Buster returned her stare, and blinked two or three times.

"He doesn't look so ugly," the woman said finally, addressing one of the attendants. "If I know anything about bears, I should say he was naturally good-humored. But of course you can't tell. His temper may have been ruined by some one. His name is Buster, you say?"

She walked up to the cage and stuck a hand between the bars and patted the shaggy head. "Well, Buster, we're either going to be friends or enemies," she added. "Which is it?"

Buster couldn't reply right away, so surprised was he, but unconsciously he stuck out his tongue and licked the hand. How soft and velvety it felt! Instead of drawing the hand away, she permitted him to lick it again. Then she smiled.

"You can see," she said, speaking to the attendant, "he's answered my question. We're going to be friends. Now open the door for me. I'm going inside."

Once more Buster was surprised, but not nearly so much as the attendant. "Don't do it, Chiquita," he said in alarm. "He's not to be trusted. He's a vicious brute."

Chiquita smiled and put on her gloves.

"Do I need your advice, Billy," she said, "when it comes to training animals? Now please open the door."

"But, Chiquita, you will wait until I summon the attendants to protect you if he attacks you."

"No, I'm going in now."

She opened the door herself and stepped in the cage. Buster watched her with eyes of admiration and surprise. He had no fear of

her. This dainty little creature could not hurt him. Indeed, she looked so slight and helpless that he felt more like protecting her than hurting her.

She came up to him and rubbed his nose. He grunted with pleasure. Then she patted his head and talked to him in a low, sweet voice. Then she asked him to get down, and when he obeyed she sat on him. She touseled his head, opened his mouth and stuck a hand in it, and finally patted him again, and said:

"He's all right, Billy, as harmless as a kitten. We'll put him in the circus tonight in place of poor old Bowser."

Billy, the attendant, wasn't convinced of the wisdom of this course, and shook his head, but Chiquita laughed and walked out of the cage.

Buster didn't know just what they meant, for he had never been in a circus before, but that evening he learned.

He was wheeled into a brilliantly lighted place and stopped alongside of a big circular cage containing nearly a dozen other animals. There was the Old Lion, Spot the Leopard, Boar the Hound, Timber the Wolf, Ocelot the Jungle Cat, and several others which he did not instantly recognize.

His coming started up a commotion among the animals, for just like people they were

curious and inquisitive. They eyed him furtively and sniffed at him. But without noticing them he waddled across the big cage and took a vacant place near the Old Lion.

Then something happened that dazzled him. The curtain around the big circular cage disappeared, and a sea of human faces were visible on every side. The lights went up, and the whole place seemed like a wonderful picture.

The next moment Chiquita entered the cage, holding her whip in one hand and a flag in the other. She gave a few sharp orders and the animals began to pose, dance and run around. It was all new to Buster and a little confusing, but he tried to follow and imitate the others. Apparently this pleased Chiquita, for she patted him once, and whispered in his ear:

"Well done, Buster! You're doing splendidly!"

Buster noticed that Spot the Leopard was often surly and ugly, refusing to obey until Chiquita hit him with the whip. This made him mind, but it didn't improve his temper any. His surliness made the others nervous, and once they got all snarled up and confused.

"You, Spot," cried Chiquita, "I'll punish you if you don't behave. Now take that!"

She gave him a sharp rap over the nose with her whip. It stung and enraged Spot, who cowered back a moment, and then crouched for a leap. Chiquita saw what was coming, but she didn't flinch. She snapped the whip in his face again, but this time the trick didn't work.

Spot flung himself through the air in a mighty leap, uttering a low savage growl, which excited the other animals so they set up a wild roar. Attendants ran to the cage with long irons and sticks in their hands, but Chiquita was penned against the iron bars, vainly trying to hold Spot off at arms' length. There was a great shout outside, and everybody stood up, with fear and horror in their eyes.

In the the midst of the confusion, Buster suddenly came to life. He had taken no part in the commotion, but when he saw Spot attacking Chiquita, whose white face and appealing eyes were turned toward him, his anger flared up. He would not stand by idly while the Leopard tore and scratched the white flesh of his friend.

With a low growl, Buster started across the cage, baring his teeth in an ugly grin, and holding aloft a paw ready to strike. The other animals stood aside to let him pass, but

Spot was snapping and snarling at Chiquita so that he did not see him.

How Buster saved Chiquita from Spot the Leopard, and won her undying friendship, will be told in the next story.

STORY IX

BUSTER SAVES CHIQUITA

Spot the Leopard had attacked Chiquita so suddenly that she had little chance of defending herself, and the other animals, excited by the commotion, were ready to join in the attack against their fair trainer.

Buster had not been in the circus long enough to learn the ways of the other animals. Chiquita had been kind to him, and after the cruel treatment from his former masters it seemed as if the dainty young trainer was more than a friend to him. He recalled Spot's threat to pounce upon Chiquita some day and punish her.

Buster resolved, as he crossed the cage in a few long strides, to protect Chiquita, and if necessary to fight Spot the Leopard. He was angry with Spot, but not so much as to inflict serious injury on him. It was only when he got close and saw the deep scratch on Chiquita's arm where the Leopard's claws had laid the flesh open, that his anger flared up to white heat.

With a deeper growl than before, he raised his right paw and delivered a telling blow on Spot's body. It was not intended as a knock-out blow, but Buster had grown to powerful proportions, and his most playful cuff was enough to do considerable damage.

It landed with a deep thud on Spot's side, and the Leopard was hurled to the other side of the cage with a bang. He struck the iron bars, and for a moment seemed too stunned or surprised to utter a sound. Buster calmly stood in front of Chiquita and glared defiantly at his enemy.

Spot recovered his senses after a while and let out a growl and screech that made every one in the circus shudder. He crouched down low, swishing his tail, and glaring at Buster. It was a moment of intense suspense.

To make matters worse the other animals kept up their uproar. The fight had stirred their blood, and they began crouching and stalking about the cage as if anxious to get in the fray. Ocelot the Jungle Cat in particular showed great excitement. He began creeping upon Buster from behind, and Timber the Wolf sneaked in closer to get a chance.

Buster through the corner of his eyes noticed the restless, threatening motions of the two. Boar the Hound ran around, barking



HE RAISED HIS RIGHT PAW AND DELIVERED A TELLING BLOW ON
SPOT'S BODY

vigorously, but made no attempt to take any part in the fight. The Old Lion, who was too sleepy and indolent even to roar, sat apart as if he was to be the judge of the contest.

Chiquita, who was slightly wounded, cowered back of her defender, unable to get her whip or to make her voice heard. A thousand spectators outside watched with horrified eyes the combat. Attendants were running around with long poles and irons to prod the animals back to their corners, but they were so excited they did little good.

Suddenly Spot the Leopard took advantage of a moment when Buster was watching Ocelot the Jungle Cat. He sprang at his enemy like an arrow from a bow. At the same instant Ocelot closed in, and Timber the Wolf watched for his opportunity.

But Buster hadn't been taken off his guard. He had kept one eye on Spot, and when he shot through the air that powerful right paw of his was raised again. It caught Spot in mid-air. It was no gentle blow this time. It was delivered with all the force that lay behind those powerful shoulder muscles.

It landed on Spot's body with such a thud that it could be heard in every corner of the great circus. The Leopard was hurled back against the iron bars with such force that it

seemed for a moment as if they would give way. Spot grunted, and dropped to the floor in such a dazed state of mind that he couldn't think or act.

Buster having delivered this knock-out blow turned swiftly to Ocelot, whose claws had sunk into his shaggy leg. The huge paw came down on Ocelot's head and nearly crushed the skull. He dropped his hold and lay down as if suddenly struck by lightning.

Buster, smarting with the pain in his leg, growled in rage, and turned to Timber the Wolf. Now Timber was naturally a coward. The punishment meted out to Spot and Ocelot immediately caused him to change his mind. He ran around the cage as Buster started in pursuit.

A temper, once it gets beyond control, is a terrible thing to have. It may lead into all sorts of trouble. Buster by this time had lost his completely. He was so enraged that he wanted to kill everything in the cage. His eyes grew blood-shot and terrible to look at.

He lunged at Timber, and missed him, but the Old Lion happened to be in the way. Buster gave him a side cuff that made him roar with pain. It was a glancing blow. If Old Lion hadn't been so old that most of his teeth were gone he would have struck back, and

Buster would have been in a peck of trouble. He didn't know much about lions in those days.

The next animal that got in his way was Boar the Hound, which he sent whimpering across the cage. Then he came to Spot, who was just recovering his senses, and with an angry snarl hit him again and stood before him like a cat over a mouse as if defying him to run or strike back.

Round and round the cage Buster pursued the animals, striking right and left, and tumbling them all in a heap whenever he got within striking distance. Ocelot climbed to the top of the iron bars and crouched there in shivering terror.

Timber the Wolf leaped and jumped over the backs of the others, and thus escaped serious injury. It was a mix-up that threatened to end in a terrible tragedy. Buster was master of the situation, and so enraged that he continually saw red. The pandemonium outside, and the quickly thrusting sticks and irons of the attendants, had no effect on his temper. He ignored the noise, and merely snapped and snarled at the sharp irons every time they got in his way.

Then Chiquita, who had been cowering in her corner in fright, suddenly regained con-

trol of her nerves. She picked up her whip, but did not use it. Instead she walked calmly up to the enraged bear, and said sharply:

"Buster! Buster!"

Buster stopped short as if pricked by a needle. When his name was repeated in that soft voice, he closed his dripping jaws and ceased growling.

"Buster, come here!" added Chiquita.

It was a soft, soothing command, and it fell on Buster's excited nerves like cooling balm. He looked at Chiquita, and then without so much as a grunt waddled toward her.

What followed made every one in the vast audience gasp. Chiquita, ignoring her danger, suddenly put her two arms around Buster's neck, and actually wept on his shaggy breast.

"Buster, you saved my life," she said gently. "Spot would surely have killed me if you hadn't come to my help. You dear old Buster!"

Buster's emotions cannot be described. All his rage suddenly vanished. He put a paw on Chiquita's shoulders, and then fearful of hurting her, dropped it to his side.

She raised her head from his breast, and added: "Now come with me. Take me outside."

And leading Buster she walked across the cage, opened the door and stepped out. Buster meekly followed. Outside she led him by a paw across the arena, and faced the great audience. "You have seen what happened," she said in a clear voice. "Can you wonder that I love Buster the Bear?"

The audience went wild, shouting and waving to them, and Buster was so confused he hardly knew what to do. In the next story Buster becomes a famous trick bear.

STORY X

BUSTER BECOMES A TRICK BEAR

Buster was not popular among the animals of the circus after his fight with Spot the Leopard, but he was a great favorite with the circus people. From being regarded as a dangerous bear, ready to kill his trainer at any moment, he was looked upon thereafter as a special pet who could be trusted by every one.

Of course, it was Chiquita who favored him the most. She bestowed more attention upon him than on any of the others. She petted him, praised him, feeding him dainties, and giving him the softest bed in the place. She even permitted him to roam about the rooms she occupied, and as Buster did not get in mischief or do any harm his liberty was extended day by day.

Buster grew as fond of Chiquita as she was of him, and he obeyed her as meekly and willingly as a pet dog. None of the ugly temper he showed when fighting Spot in the cage

showed itself again, and Chiquita **began** training him for trick performances.

Buster had already received a little training, and he was quick to pick up his new lessons. He soon learned to jump through a hoop, skip rope, and turn somersaults back and forth. Then one day, Chiquita said:

“You would make a good clown, Buster, I believe. Yes, you would.”

Not knowing what a clown was, Buster merely grinned and nodded his head. Chiquita made a wonderful dress for him out of red, white and blue flannel, and with a tall hat on his head Buster looked like the cartoon of Uncle Sam. Dressed as the goddess of liberty, Chiquita appeared in the arena walking arm in arm with her escort.

This brought great applause from the audience, and what pleased the people pleased Buster. He grinned and nodded his head, and strutted around with his head high in the air.

All the time he was receiving special favors and attention, Spot the Leopard and Ocelot the Jungle Cat were in their cages watching for an opportunity to get revenge on him. The pain they suffered from Buster's hard blows was nothing to what they **suffered** in

mind and spirit. They were nearly consumed with rage and envy.

Buster never passed near the cage without their snarling and spitting at him. They could do this in safety, for the iron bars were between them. Right down in their hearts, however, they were afraid of him.

Buster, who carried no spirit of ill-feeling against them, merely grinned when they spit at him. But one day he stopped in front of Spot's cage, and said:

"Why don't you forget and forgive, Spot? This carrying a grouch around with you all the time spoils your face. Let's be friends."

"Friends!" snarled Spot. "I may think of that after I've clawed off some of your hide!"

"Me too!" echoed Ocelot. "And I'd like to begin with your eyes."

"And I'll lap up his warm blood when you've killed him," growled Timber the Wolf from his cage.

Buster, instead of being offended at these threats, sat back on his haunches and laughed. Then noticing the Old Lion watching them, his eyes blinking sleepily, he turned to him.

"What would you like to do to me, Old Lion?" he asked.

"Nothing, Buster, except to give you some good advice," was the reply.

"That's a friendly offer. I'll listen to it."

The Old Lion winked and blinked, stretched himself with a yawn, and then sat up looking for all the world like the noble king of the beasts.

"When your enemies threaten you, Buster," he said slowly, "it is wise to listen to them so you may be prepared. Don't let the pride of strength deceive you. The mouse gnawed through the net that the lion couldn't break, and Cobra the Reptile put a whole jungle of animals to flight. That is all, Buster."

"Thank you, Old Lion," replied Buster. "I'll remember what you said."

"It doesn't make any difference to me whether you remember it or not," was the answer, as the Old Lion stretched out and went to sleep.

Buster did remember the advice for a few days, and then forgot it. He also ignored Spot and Ocelot, for they refused to make friends with him. Meanwhile, his progress as a trick bear increased, and he appeared nightly before big audiences with Chiquita.

One day the big tent was taken down, for the circus was to move to another town. There was such noise and confusion that every one was upset. Buster found his customary resting place filled with packing boxes and bag-

gage. Somewhat put out by this he wandered around, and finally climbed on the top of a bundle of canvas away from the confusion.

It was a soft, comfortable bed, and Buster soon fell asleep. He snored and rolled around in his slumber until attendants came running up to find out what the trouble was. When they discovered him, they laughed and said:

"It's only Buster taking his mid-day snooze with the high treble stops wide open."

Buster hadn't noticed that the pile of canvas was close to the two cages where Spot and Ocelot were kept. They had kept so quiet that he never suspected their nearness. But the Leopard and Jungle Cat had seen him, and were watching him with flashing eyes.

As he snored and rolled around in his sleep, they kept their eyes patiently and watchfully on him. Once a shaggy paw came close to Spot's cage, and he stealthily put out a forearm to see if he could reach it. He fell short about an inch.

He withdrew his paw silently and resumed his watchful waiting. Ocelot on the other side was equally interested in one of Buster's fore paws. It was within a few feet of his cage.

Buster rolled over and flung his legs out to their full length like an animal stretching.

The result was just what the two vengeful enemies were waiting for. Spot reached through the bars of his cage and caught the hind leg of Buster with his sharp claws, and Ocelot attacked one of his fore-legs.

Buster was aroused from his sleep by sharp pains that seemed like a thousand needles sticking in him. When he attempted to spring to his feet he found himself a prisoner. Spot and Ocelot were tugging, tearing and biting with all their might as if they would pull him apart and haul him through the bars of their cages.

Taken at such a disadvantage, Buster for a moment was helpless. Then the pain became so severe that he brought all of his powerful muscles into play, and jerked with such force that both cages came tumbling over on top of him.

The sudden upsetting of their cages startled Spot and Ocelot so that they jumped back in fright. Buster was immediately on his feet, rolling the cages around as if they had been made of jackstraws. With a lightning blow through the bars he struck Spot a whack that sent him reeling backward. Then before he could recover, Buster sprang around on the opposite side and knocked him back. For a

moment it looked as if he would break through the cage and kill Spot.

When the attendants ran up, Buster was shaking Ocelot's cage in a vain endeavor to get at him. The Jungle Cat was so frightened that he shivered and whined for mercy. Buster's anger could not be quieted until Chiquita came up. She patted him, and led him away to bind up his wounds. The Leopard and Jungle Cat were glad to see him go. In trying to get revenge on Buster they had been punished nearly as much as he.

"I should have remembered the Old Lion's advice," Buster said to himself when Chiquita bound up his wounds. Then looking at her, he added: "But there's some good in everything. I wouldn't have such a tender nurse if I wasn't wounded." And he smiled with satisfaction.

Next will come the story of how Buster was caught in a railroad wreck.

STORY XI

BUSTER IN A RAILROAD WRECK

The circus was preparing to move into its winter quarters, and it was the confusion of packing that caused Buster to get mixed up with Spot and Ocelot in their cages. His injuries were very slight, and within a few days after Chiquita had bound them up his legs were as good as new.

He felt a little angry at the Leopard and Jungle Cat for attacking him when fast asleep, but Buster wasn't the kind to nurse a grudge. When his wrath cooled a little he actually laughed at the occurrence. Strolling outside to where the cages were standing, he grinned at the Leopard.

"You got a good dig at me, Spot," he said, "but with that last cuff I gave you I guess we can call it even. Head ache yet?"

Spot didn't reply, but paced his narrow cage in restless dissatisfaction. Buster turned to the Jungle Cat.

"How about you, Ocelot! Got over your scare yet? I didn't touch you, but you looked

as scared as a rat in a trap when I shook your cage."

Ocelot showed the same silent contempt and refused to reply other than with a low snarl. Buster turned to Old Lion.

"The only cheerful one I find in this group is you, Old Lion," he added. "Spot and Ocelot don't look happy, and Timber the Wolf acts as if he had an ingrowing pain in his stomach. How about you?"

"I'm always cheerful," replied Old Lion. "That's why I've grown bald and toothless, and lived to a good old age. Spot and Ocelot will die young if they don't change their manners. So will you, Buster."

"Why," stammered Buster, "I do try to be cheerful. I didn't know I was anything else."

"That may be," replied Old Lion, "but you're too ready for a fight. Every battle you get in shortens your life by so many days."

"I don't fight unless I'm attacked," was the quick reply.

"I didn't know the animals attacked you the other night in the circus. You started the fight."

"Yes, but not until after they had attacked Chiquita," Buster said indignantly. "I had to protect her, for she was a friend of mine."

"Are you going to fight to protect all your friends in this world?" asked Old Lion sleepily. "If you do, I predict you will die young. Now I must go to sleep, for we begin our long journey soon, and I do hate riding on a train. It rasps my nerves."

Buster never knew how seriously to take the Old Lion's words, but he was a companionable and harmless old fellow, and sometimes rambled on just to hear himself talk. He was getting so old that talking was the easiest thing to do, and between eating and sleeping that was about all he did. Sometimes he appeared in the circus as a fierce old lion, who had killed any number of keepers, but it was growing harder and harder for him to assume the pose. He wasn't fierce looking at all, except when he roared, and that was such an exertion he seldom did it unless prodded by the attendants.

"How does it feel to ride on a train?" Buster asked when he saw that the Old Lion was going to drop off asleep right before him.

"How does it feel?" he drawled. "Why, it feels as if all the bones in your body were rattling, and when the train stops — and its stopping all the time when it isn't going — you stand on your head and then on your tail, and if you're lucky you don't die of fright."

"It must be a wonderful experience," remarked Buster.

"It is, and you won't enjoy it. I don't know what trains were invented for unless it was to torture those who ride in them. But when we get there we'll have a long rest."

"Where?" asked Buster.

"Where we're going, and when you get there you wonder why you came, and where you are. Now do you understand?"

Buster laughed good-naturedly, for his quizzing was making the Old Lion irritable. He wanted to sleep and Buster strolled away, leaving him to enjoy his nap.

The next day the animals were taken aboard the train. Some of the harmless ones were led there and tied to posts in box cars, and others like Ocelot and Spot were lifted aboard in their stout cages. No chance could be taken with them.

Buster found himself in a small compartment of a baggage car, with Chiquita occupying a seat just forward of him. She trusted him so much that she liked to have him near her. But as he had never been on a railroad journey before he was fastened in the car by a chain.

"You might forget yourself, Buster, or get excited, and try to jump off when the train was

moving," she said to him, when chaining him up. "It isn't because I don't trust you. You understand that, don't you?"

Buster nodded his head, as she patted him, and looked at the chain. It was not a very strong one, and he smiled at the thought of what he could do to it if he wanted to escape. He could snap it in two with one jerk of his powerful body.

The train started finally, and Buster was as interested and excited as a child on her first railroad journey. The jolting and rattling began almost at once. He recalled Old Lion's words, and wondered if he was groaning in agony. Such rolling and jerking were enough to rattle Old Lion's teeth loose. And Spot and Ocelot! How did they like the noise and confusion?

The train steamed along slowly at first, and then faster. Through a window in the baggage car Buster could see the houses and trees flashing past as if they were all running in the opposite direction. It was a funny sensation. Instead of being frightened by it, Buster enjoyed it.

"I never ran so fast in my life," he said to himself. "Even Loup the Lynx couldn't run as fast as this."

He stopped and scowled. He never thought of Loup without growing angry. The Lynx had treated him in a cowardly, cruel way, and Buster somehow wanted to punish him for it. But there seemed little prospect of his ever meeting the Lynx again.

"Oh, well," Buster sighed, "I can't spoil my temper thinking of something that happened in the past."

Still right down in his heart he had a great desire to go back to the woods where he had been born. Perhaps his mother was alive yet, and he would dearly like to see her again. How surprised she would be to find him grown up, fully as big as she, and far more powerful!

Suddenly in the midst of these thoughts there came a grinding shriek outside, and the most fearful of explosions. Buster raised his head to listen, and then he was thrown against the opposite side of the baggage car with such force that the chain snapped. Everything began to break and fall down upon him, the whole roof of the car collapsing.

Stunned by the fall, and unable to understand what had happened, Buster lay there a moment in silence. Everything was quiet after that awful noise, but wild shrieks of Ocelot, Spot and other animals soon filled the air.

Then came the deafening hiss of steam, and shouts and cries of men.

What had happened! Buster was curious to know what all this noise meant, and finding himself loose, with no roof over him, he climbed out of the wreck. It was dark outside, but there were many lights flashing around.

Buster walked down the track where a group of men were at work. They paid no attention to him, and he sat down to wait. Chiquita would come along soon to claim him. But he waited and waited, and nobody paid any attention to him. Finally, he got up and wandered off in the fields, and before he stopped he was lost and couldn't find his way back again.

"I think I'll sleep here until morning," he said, seeking a good resting place under a tree. "Then I'll find my way back to the train."

But it wasn't the train he found. It was the little girl who had given him candy that day he danced for pennies.

STORY XII

BUSTER MEETS THE LITTLE GIRL AGAIN

When Buster woke the next morning the sun was just peeping above the trees. He had slept so soundly that he couldn't recall right away all that had happened the previous night. He opened his eyes, and was surprised when he found that nothing around him was familiar.

He grunted and rose to his feet, blinking at the sun. Then it all returned to him. He remembered the jolt and crash, and the splintering of the roof of his car. He rubbed his head to see if the bruise still hurt him, and winced when it pained him.

"I wonder what happened to the Old Lion," he said, grinning. "He must have lost all his teeth last night."

Then he thought of Chiquita. If she was in the wreck, too, she may have lost something more than her teeth. Suppose she had lost her life! This thought grieved Buster.

"I must go back and find out," he said. "She'll miss me."

He waddled away through the bushes until he came to a road that was unfamiliar to him. Which way did he go to reach the railroad? He started up it, but hadn't gone far before he saw a man approaching, carrying a basket on his arm. Buster was less alarmed than the man apparently, for with a shriek of terror the latter dropped his basket and ran up the road so fast that he was soon out of sight.

"What a foolish thing to do," laughed Buster. "He must have had an evil conscience or he wouldn't be frightened like that."

He waddled up to the basket the man had dropped. One sniff at its contents made his heart jump with joy. It was filled with nice fresh bread, rolls, and two blackberry pies.

Buster didn't consider it stealing. The man had left the basket, and it belonged to any one who found it. He was very hungry, but bear-like or boy-like (I don't know which to call it) he began with the blackberry pies instead of the bread. He ate them up rapidly, stuffing them in his mouth with both paws. When they were gone he looked through the basket for more.

The bread didn't taste nearly so good after the pies, but Buster was still very hungry, and, not finding any more dessert, he began slowly munching the bread. If there had been soup,

I suppose, he would have ended his meal with that.

After eating a dozen rolls, and one loaf of bread, he felt better. A noise up the street, accompanied by loud shouting, suddenly made him stop and listen. Perhaps the man who owned the basket was returning with help.

Buster decided that he wouldn't wait until the men appeared, and taking a loaf of bread in each of his front paws he climbed over the fence and disappeared in the woods. Long before the men reached the spot he had made his way into the heart of a big swamp where he sat down and finished his meal.

He felt so much better by that time that he took a long drink from the brook, and then resumed his journey. He came out of the swamp on the opposite side, and seeing a hill climbed to the top. He hoped to get a view of the railroad from there.

But when he reached it he saw no signs of it. There was a small cluster of houses on his right, a swamp and woods behind him, and open country on his left, with here and there a farm house. Buster decided to keep away from the village.

The farm houses attracted him, for he could hear the crowing of a rooster off in that direction and the cackling of geese. There was the

moo of a cow and the neighing of a horse from one barn-yard, and the barking of a dog from another.

"I won't bother the dog," Buster said, keeping away from that farm-yard. "They're harmless, but very annoying."

He waddled across a field and climbed a fence until he stood in the barn-yard of the nearest farm. After reaching the barn he poked his head in the open doorway. A boy was in there milking a cow. Buster watched the streams of milk, and a sudden desire to taste milk again made him forget all caution. He stepped across the threshold, a pleasant grin on his face, and a rollicking smile in his eyes.

But the boy didn't see anything friendly in either the grin or the twinkling eyes. When he glanced up and caught sight of Buster, he sat on his milk stool as if paralyzed, and then recovering himself he let out a shrill cry and darted for the opposite door. He disappeared like a flash, leaving the milk pail behind him.

"How foolish of him!" said Buster. "I wouldn't hurt him!"

He picked up the milk pail and held it to his lips. There was a gurgle, gurgle as the milk ran down his throat, and it never stopped

until three whole quarts were emptied in his stomach.

"That makes me feel better," he said, rubbing his fat stomach. "I'm so full now I can hardly walk. I'm sleepy, too."

The hay-mow overhead attracted him. How pleasant it would be to rest and sleep there! He was going to climb up the ladder for this purpose when a great noise outside alarmed him. He peeked out, and saw a big crowd of men and boys armed with sticks, axes, pitchforks and shot-guns, running toward the barn.

Buster decided to leave, for he had no desire to meet the crowd. While his enemies came in the front door, Buster ran out of the back one, crossed an orchard, and reached a field beyond before he was discovered. He had a long start of them, but when they caught sight of him again they began to blaze away with their shot-guns.

Buster was an excellent runner, and he made good time. Ahead of him was a bigger house, with a wide lawn in front, and a garden in back. Buster wasn't going to enter this place, but another crowd of men appeared in front of him. If he kept on he would run right into their arms.

Buster darted to the right, crossed the lawn and reached the back of the house. There was no one around, and Buster hunted for a hiding place. There was an open window over his head on the second story of the house, and a low shed leading up to it.

Buster suddenly decided that was his best hiding place, and up the shed he climbed, scrambling to the roof and crawling across this to the open window. He looked inside, and seeing no one he entered.

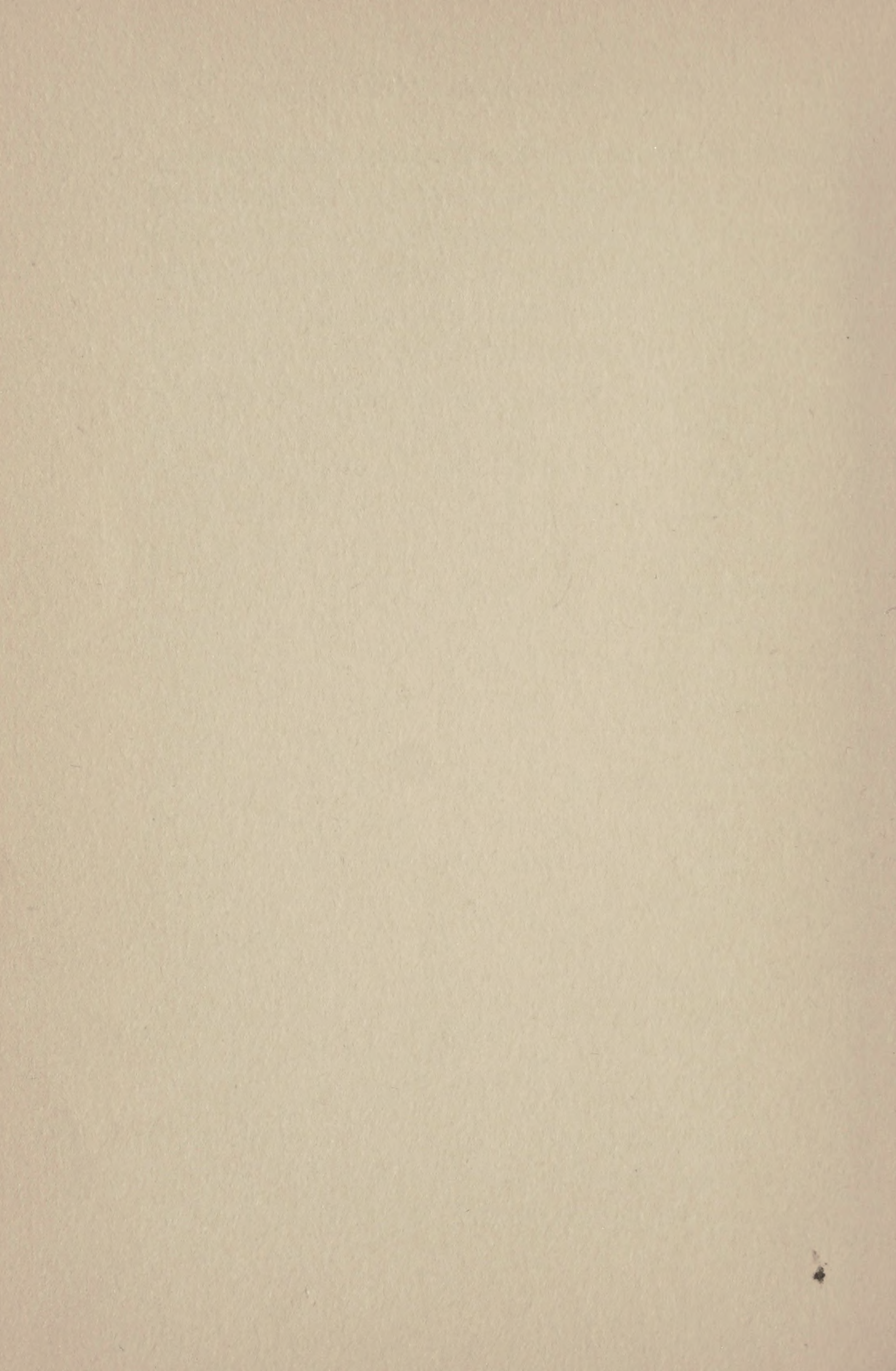
He was breathing hard, for after eating so much, his exertions told on him. This noise must have awakened the little sleeper on the bed, for suddenly she rose up and startled Buster so that he nearly fell down in a faint. He supposed the room was empty, and here was a young person staring at him. He stared back, grinning foolishly. He felt very much like a boy who had been caught stealing.

Then to his surprise the girl clapped her hands, and said: "Oh, I believe you're Buster! Yes, I know you are! And I'm so glad!"

Until then Buster hadn't recognized the little person. Now he remembered her. It was the little girl who had offered him a stick of candy that day he danced for pennies on the street.

But what pleased Buster more than anything else was her joy. She wasn't a bit afraid of him! She wasn't going to run away and scream for help. She wouldn't hand him over to the men pursuing him with shot-guns. What a relief to him this was! She was surely his friend, and would protect him just as Chiquita had done so many times. He grinned with pleasure, and waddled toward the bed.

How the little girl outwitted the men, and saved Buster from them, will be told in the next story.



STORY XIII

BUSTER AND THE LITTLE GIRL

Instead of showing fear when Buster approached the bed, the little girl held out a hand, and when he was near enough she took one of his shaggy paws and patted it. This seemed natural enough to Buster, for he could not understand why any one should be afraid of him, and Chiquita had done the same thing many times; but to most little girls perhaps it would seem like a brave and fearless thing. This little girl like Little Red Riding-Hood was not afraid of bears or wolves until they tried to eat her up.

"I'm glad to see you, Buster," she said with quaint gravity. "But how did you ever get here?"

Buster grinned and turned his head toward the open window. The little girl followed his gaze, and instantly understood.

"Oh, you came through the window," she added. "That makes it so much more interesting. Fairies and elves always come through open windows. Won't you sit down?"

Buster was quite tired after his hard run, and was very glad to accept this invitation. The foot of the bed seemed a very inviting seat, and he sat on the white coverlet.

But almost immediately he sprang up in alarm. The springs creaked under his great weight, and for a moment it looked as if the whole bed would collapse. He jumped to his feet with a queer expression on his face. In fact, he wasn't sure but this was some sort of a trap set for him.

But the little girl laughed merrily at the accident, and clapped both hands. He could not believe she was attempting to deceive him, and he grinned like a foolish boy who had discovered a bent pin in his chair.

"Oh, Buster," she cried, "I guess this isn't a *bear-bed*. You're too heavy for it. Maybe the chair will hold you."

Buster turned and looked at the chair. He seemed a little doubtful, but he wanted to be polite. He tried it carefully, but when it began to crack and groan under his weight he was wise enough not to go any further. He shook his head, and put the chair back in its place.

The little girl shrieked with laughter again. It was very amusing to her, and Buster, not wishing to offend her, grinned and nodded his



HE DIDN'T MIND THE FLOOR AS A SEAT

head. He liked children, and this one was anxious to play with him. After a while she grew serious again, and looked around at every article in the room.

"I don't know, Buster," she said slowly, "but you'll have to sit on the floor. I don't think anything else is strong enough to hold you. It's not very polite to ask visitors to sit on the floor, but what else can I do, unless you prefer to stand?"

Buster didn't prefer to stand. He was very tired, and he didn't mind the floor as a seat at all. In fact, it was more suitable to him than a bed or chair. So he squatted down on his haunches, and smiled. Even then his head towered above the little girl's.

"Are you comfortable there?" she asked.

Buster nodded. "Then," she added, "you must tell me where you came from, and how you escaped those cruel men. I want to hear the whole story. It's better than a story from a book, and I love story books about bears. Did you ever hear the story of Goldy Locks or the Three Little Bears? No. Then I'll tell you."

But she didn't have time. Just then there was a great commotion outside. Men were shouting and calling, dogs barking, and a great hullabaloo going on under the open window.

"What's that!" exclaimed the little girl, hopping out of the bed, and running to the window in her bare feet.

Buster could have told her what the noise meant, and for a moment he thought it was his duty to give himself up to keep the little girl from being harmed. Suppose the crowd searching for him should hurt her! He got up, and tried to pull her away from the window, but she pushed him back quickly.

"Go back, Buster!" she cried. "They're looking for you, but they won't have you. They mustn't see you!"

The dogs below were barking. They had tracked Buster to the woodshed, and were now holding their nose up in the air baying loudly. As plain as words they were saying the bear had climbed to the roof of the shed.

The men saw the open window, and immediately a hoarse cry rose. "He's gone in that window! He's eating up little Nell! Oh! Oh!"

You could imagine Buster's emotions when he heard this outcry. To be accused of eating up little Nell was enough to make any self-respecting bear angry. He growled savagely, and started for the window again. But the little girl restrained him once more.

"No, no, Buster, you musn't let them see you!" she cried. "Now let me think! What ought I to do? They'll be here soon. Yes," glancing out of the window, "they're climbing up the shed. Oh, Buster, hide under the bed!"

Buster obeyed, but he might just as well have tried to crawl through the key-hole of the lock on the door. He couldn't possibly squeeze under the bed without upsetting it.

"Dear me," added Nell, biting her lips, "where can I hide you?"

She looked at the closet filled with her pretty clothes. She ran to it and looked in. It was such a small closet that Buster couldn't possibly crowd in it.

"I don't know, Buster," she added, "what I can do." She looked at her trunk. No, of course, not; she couldn't get Buster in that. The bureau next, and then the wash-stand. Not one of them was big enough to hold one of Buster's hind legs.

They could hear the men climbing to the roof of the shed now. In a few moments they would appear at the open window with their shot-guns and pitchforks. The little girl was more excited than Buster. Suddenly an idea came to her, and she gasped with delight.

"Here, Buster," she called sharply, seizing him by a paw. "You must lie down on the floor at the foot of the bed. Get way down! No, no, not that way! This way! Pull your legs up like a cat cuddling up before the fire. There, that's right. Now don't you move or make a sound. You hear me?"

She shook a finger warningly at him. She had made Buster curl up on the floor at the foot of the bed in the smallest space he had ever before occupied. It was not a comfortable position for him, but for the little girl's sake he was satisfied to stay there.

Then Nell pulled the clothes down, and threw them over the foot-board of the bed and spread them out on the floor until Buster was completely covered. She laid the pillows on top just as if they had been put there to air. She had been taught to do this every morning after rising, and then open the window for the fresh air to blow in.

The men appeared at the window just as she had finished. Without waiting for an invitation they climbed in.

"Where is he?" they asked. "Where's the bear? We thought he was in here eating you up, Nell."

They were glancing all around the room, and if Buster hadn't been so well concealed

they would have seen him. Nell turned to them with dignity, and said in her high little voice:

“What an idea! Is there a bear around here? Oh, I’d dearly like to see him! I know he wouldn’t hurt me! Where did he come from? Is he outside?”

She ran to the window and looked out. Satisfied now that Buster was not in the room, the men climbed out, but they closed the window after them, and said: “Keep that shut, Nell!”

In the next story Buster is discovered in the house.

STORY XIV

BUSTER TRIES TO ESCAPE AND IS DISCOVERED

When the men left the room and closed the window after them, Buster and the little girl felt greatly relieved. Satisfied that the bear had not climbed in the open window, the searching party turned their attention elsewhere. But the danger wasn't over yet, and Nell knew it. She patted the top of the bed-clothes, and whispered:

"Keep quiet a little longer, Buster. Here comes some one up the stairs."

Buster grunted and lay as still as a mouse. There was a knocking on the door, and when the little girl opened it her father appeared. He was very white and trembling.

"A bear that escaped from the railroad wreck is roaming around here, Nell," he said. "I was terribly afraid he had climbed up the shed to your room. I'm so glad you're safe."

He kissed her and seemed greatly relieved to find his daughter safe. He crossed the room and looked out of the window. Then he returned to her.

"Perhaps you're safer here until they find him," he added. "Stay right here in your room, and keep the door and window locked. I'll come and tell you when they find him."

The little girl could have laughed in her glee, for this was just what she wanted. She was terribly afraid Buster would smother under all those clothes and make a noise. She couldn't get her father out of the room quick enough.

When he was gone, and the door locked, she ran to the bed, and threw back the clothes. Buster was all curled up just as she had left him. But he was fast asleep! It was a warm, comfortable bed, and after his long run and heavy breakfast of pies, rolls, bread and milk it had seemed impossible to keep his eyes open for long. And the moment he closed them he was sound asleep.

The little girl sat down on the floor, and laughed until the tears streamed down her cheeks. Buster woke with a start and blinked at her. He couldn't for several minutes imagine where he was.

"Oh, Buster," she exclaimed finally, "I thought you were being smothered to death, and you were so comfortable you fell asleep."

Buster struggled to his feet and began chuckling. It made him happy to see the

merriment of the little girl. She pulled the clothes up and flung them back on the bed. She was a very prim little housekeeper, for she was not satisfied until the pillows were brushed off and patted in position and the sheets and covers carefully smoothed out.

Buster watched her in silence, and then in his clumsy way offered to help, but he pulled the clothes so hard, and made such a general mess of it, that he stopped when the girl sat down and laughed again at him.

"I never saw anybody so clumsy, Buster," she said. "No, you can't help any more. You sit down there in the middle of the floor until I'm through. Then we'll have breakfast together."

The moment she uttered these words she stopped. Have breakfast together? How could she arrange that? How, in fact, could she manage to get Buster any breakfast without somebody discovering him in her room?

What did bears eat anyway? And how much? Goodness, from the size of him, he might eat her father out of house and home! The little girl felt terribly distressed all of a sudden. She had saved Buster from his pursuers, but now that she had him what was she going to do with him?

You couldn't keep bears in a bed-room or closet, nor could you chain them up in the back yard like a dog? Everybody would be afraid to visit the house, and all the servants would leave. What could she do?

"Buster, haven't you any home you can go to?" she asked suddenly, turning to him. Then she remembered what her father had told her. The train carrying the circus animals had been wrecked, and some of the people and animals killed. Of course, the circus people would like Buster back again, but was he happy there? Or did he run away because they treated him cruelly?

"Buster, do you want to go back to the circus?" she added after a pause. "For if you do I'll have to tell them you're here, and if they want you they'll call for you."

Now Buster had no desire just then to return to the circus. He thought it would be much nicer to live with the little girl and play with her. So he shook his head vigorously, which made the girl sigh, and say solemnly: "Then you won't have to go back! I'll keep you here!"

She cleaned up things in the room, and dressed herself. Her breakfast was waiting for her downstairs, and if she didn't go soon her father would be up after her.

"Buster," she said once more, laying a hand on his head, "I'm going down now to get my breakfast, and then I'll bring you something to eat — some sugar and coffee, and jam and — and — what do you like to eat?"

Buster only grinned and shook his head. The little girl was puzzled. "I know what I'll do," she added, smiling. "I'll ask my father. He's wise and knows everything, and he'll tell me what bears eat. I know he'll like you, Buster."

Of course, Buster wasn't quite so sure of this, but he had no way to express his doubts. He heard the little girl running down the stairs, and then for a long time he was left alone. It was a queer situation for him. He walked across the room, and the floor squeaked with every tread. Then he looked out of the window and immediately ducked his head, for there was a man and dog below on guard.

He waited a long time for the little girl to return, and then grew restless. He tried the door, and finding it unlocked opened it and stuck his head out. All was quiet in the house. He couldn't hear any one around.

A great fear that something had happened to the little girl suddenly made him very anxious. Perhaps the men and dogs had captured her, and were holding her because she

had hid him in her bed-room. This thought made him angry. If she was in trouble and needed him, he would go to her assistance.

Buster closed the door softly behind him and started down the stairs. Now that he was going to the little girl's assistance he wasn't afraid of anything. He hadn't been afraid to attack all the animals in the big cage when Chiquita was in danger. Then why should he be afraid now!

Down, down the stairs he clumped, his great weight making each step squeak and groan. Nobody was in the hall below, and the whole house seemed quiet and deserted. Had the men taken the little girl away with them? Buster uttered an angry growl and took another step down.

Then directly in front of him appeared a man. He stepped out of a doorway so suddenly that both bear and man were surprised. Buster recognized him immediately as the gentleman who held the little girl's hands that day she fed him a stick of candy.

The man started suddenly, stared at the bear on the stairs, and backed slowly away. "Nell! Nell!" he called. "Keep away! Go back! The bear is in the house! Run for your life and tell the men!"

But little Nell, instead of running away, pushed past her father and surprised him so that he nearly dropped down with fright. She ran straight up to Buster and hugged him. Then laughing she turned to her father.

"It's only Buster, and he wouldn't hurt me. Why, he's been in my bed-room all the time!"

What they decided to do with Buster after that will be told in the next story.

STORY XV

BUSTER IS TO BE SENT TO THE ZOO

It seemed almost like a fairy story to the little girl's father when she told him how Buster had climbed through the window of her room, and how she had covered him up with the bed-clothes to protect him from the men. And he didn't believe in fairy stories! In fact, he didn't believe just then that he was awake and hearing things. It surely was all a dream.

But there was Buster on the stairs, and his little girl hugging the great big, shaggy creature. Why, with one blow the bear could crush the life out of her! It made him tremble to think of it. He tried to call her away, but she didn't hear him. She was talking to Buster, who seemed to understand.

"Now, papa, you see he won't hurt me," she said finally, "and I won't let the men hurt him. We must do something for him."

"Yes, yes, dear," was the stammering reply. "But what?"

"Can't we keep him here?"

The man smiled for the first time. "Where — in your bed-room?"

"No-o, but maybe outdoors. I think he likes outdoors the best."

"But, dear, he would never be happy here, and he'd frighten all of our neighbors. He may be good to you, but he might be ugly to others."

"Not if they were kind to him," was the confident answer.

"Maybe not! Maybe not! But we must think of it."

He was quiet for a moment, watching Buster out of the corner of his eyes. He was less afraid of the bear than at first. Something in his eyes made him think that perhaps his little girl's trust was not misplaced after all. But he had a natural fear of all wild animals, and did not like to run any risks.

"I'll tell you, dear," he added finally, "we'll put Buster in the cellar until the men have gone, and then — then we'll telegraph to the owners of the circus. They will come for him, and he'll be better off with them than with us."

"But maybe he ran away from the circus because they were cruel to him," protested Nell. "I don't want him to go back then."

"I don't know about that, but I read in the papers that the circus people are going out of business. Their loss of animals in the smash-up decided them to give up the show business. Chiquita, their famous trainer, was injured so she'll never go back to performing again. I believe she's in the hospital now, and won't be out for a month or two."

Now all this was news to Buster. They couldn't understand how eager he was to learn all about the circus. If Chiquita was injured in the wreck, then perhaps Spot and Ocelot and Old Lion were hurt, too, or even dead.

It made him very sad, for it meant the end of his circus life. He would never want to perform for another trainer now that Chiquita was gone. Poor Chiquita! Buster shed a tear for her, for she had been his dear friend, and he knew now that he couldn't help her or ever see her again.

"Then, papa," broke in little Nell again, "we can keep Buster, can't we?"

"Only a few days, dear," was the smiling reply. "We have no place to keep him, and I'm sure he'd soon try to escape."

The little girl pouted, and looked anxiously at Buster before speaking. "Then what will become of him?" she added. "He won't have

any home at all. That will be dreadful, papa, and he's been so good to me."

"Ah!" exclaimed her father suddenly, his eyes brightening. "I have it. We'll send him to the Zoo. We'll make them a present of him if the circus people don't come to claim him."

The little girl was not exactly sure that she approved of this, and she continued pouting and looking at Buster. "But won't they shut him up in a cage, and keep him there all the time?" she queried. "I don't think I'd like to be caged forever and forever, would you?"

The question was addressed to her father, but Buster answered it with a vigorous shake of the head. He didn't know anything about the Zoo. It was a place he had never heard about, but if they kept bears caged up there all the time he didn't care to know more about it. It certainly was a dreadful place.

He had often pitied Spot and Ocelot for being shut up in their cages all the time, but he blamed them a good deal for that. They wouldn't behave themselves decently, and it served them right. But that was no reason why he should be kept in a cage all the rest of his life. No, he preferred to be free.

"My dear," Buster heard the father say after a pause, "that is the only wise thing to

do. Keeping him here is simply out of the question. We must put him in the cellar until I can notify the authorities. Then they'll put him in a cage at the Zoo, and you can go and see him as often as you like."

The thought of being able to see Buster at the Zoo made her feel better, and she turned and whispered to him: "I'll come every week to see you, Buster, and I'll bring you sugar and peanuts and candy, and everything."

Buster smiled, for he knew that she meant what she said, but he was greatly troubled in mind. Could he, for the sake of seeing the little girl once a week, endure prison for the rest of his life? All the outdoor freedom would then be denied him. He couldn't walk around, nor perform before people in the circus; he couldn't even crawl under a pile of canvas or a clump of bushes to sleep. He would always be behind those iron bars.

He remembered how Old Lion had complained of the monotony of life in the cage, and Old Lion had grown old and weak in doing nothing. Spot, Ocelot and Timber had never become reconciled to their captivity, but paced their cages day and night longing to escape.

Buster drew a great sigh, and glanced out of the window. He saw green trees, smiling

fields and tinkling brook. Ah, how he loved those! No, he could not leave them forever. He started for the outside door as if to leave the house.

"Don't let him out, Nell," the little girl's father said. "The men and dogs are out there. Do you think you can get him down the cellar for the night?"

"Yes, papa, he'll come with me," was the answer. "Won't you, Buster?"

Buster nodded, and followed her. He had no wish to go outside and fall in the hands of his pursuers. So he meekly followed the little girl down the stairs to the cellar where he was safe from all his enemies. It was a wide, roomy cellar, and Buster felt quite content there, but the thought that the men might call for him on the morrow to take him away to the Zoo spoilt his happiness.

When the little girl left him, he had made up his mind. Before morning he would break out of the cellar and escape. There had come into his mind a vision of the woods where he had been born, and a great desire to find his way back. Could he do it? In the next story you will hear how he set out on his long journey, and what happened to him.

STORY XVI

BUSTER RETURNS TO THE NORTH WOODS

Buster spent the rest of the day in the cellar of the house where the little girl lived, sleeping part of the time and playing with his little friend whenever she had the time to come down. There were many things in the cellar that smelt good — jams and jellies stored away in a closet, potatoes, apples and cabbages in bins, and boxes full of dry groceries — but Buster did not touch any of these. He ate what the little girl fed him, and nothing else.

As the day dragged along, and night approached, he thought more and more of the North Woods where he had been born. He saw the beautiful river that flowed past the cave, heard the tinkling of the waves and the songs of the birds, and sniffed the fragrance of the millions of wild flowers. He thought of his mother, who had mourned his death — of Loup the Lynx, who had driven him from home, and made him an exile.

And the more he thought of these things, the more anxious he was to return to the

woods. He was not needed in the circus now. Chiquita had gone, and he would never find another trainer like her. The little girl was his friend and loved him, but he could have no home with her. Then the place for him was in the woods where he would be free to roam about and hunt as he chose.

It was nearly dark when the little girl said good-night to him. She kissed him on the tip of the nose, and Buster felt a desire to take her in his arms and hug her. But he knew that would never do. His gentlest hug might break her little bones and kill her. So he contented himself with a smile and grin, and waved a paw to her as she closed the door.

Buster ate the supper she had brought down to him. He felt that he needed it all for his great journey. It might be days before he could get another such supper. It was quite dark outside when he had finished.

But there were lights upstairs and sounds of voices. Buster sat down and waited until they had all gone to bed, and the house was as quiet as a mouse. Then he got up and began preparing for his escape. The windows were out of the question, for they were too small for him to crawl through. So he devoted himself to breaking through the outside door.

This was locked, but Buster leaned his heavy weight against it until the lock creaked and then snapped. The door sprung open so suddenly that he tumbled outside all in a heap. The night was clear and quiet. The noise made by the bursting of the lock did not seem to disturb anybody, and Buster started across the fields in a slow jog trot.

When he reached the border of the swamp, he skirted the edge instead of plunging through it. He finally came out on the road where he had frightened the man carrying a basket of pies and rolls. He smiled at the remembrance of it, and wondered if the man would come again with another basketful of good things.

Buster had started out with the intention of finding his way back to the North Woods, but he soon found himself in a quandary. Which way should he go to find them? And how far off were they?

He might have been compelled, after all, to return to the little girl's house and go to the Zoo for the rest of his days, if he hadn't stumbled by accident upon Sleepy the Opossum cuddled up in a crotch of a tree.

"Hello, Sleepy," he called, "can you direct me to the North Woods, and tell me how far I must travel to reach them?"

"Follow the wind, Buster," replied Sleepy, "and travel day and night until you get there. That's all I know."

The wind was blowing from the north, and after traveling in that direction all night, crossing fields, woods and swamps, he came to rest in a dense thicket. "I'll sleep here," he said, "until night, and then go on."

He didn't want to show himself in the day time, and so he slept soundly all day. When he stretched himself toward sundown, he saw Curly the Skunk nearby watching.

"How far is it to the North Woods, Curly?" he asked. "And which way do I go?"

"It's far again as you've traveled, Buster," was the reply, "and it will take you twice as long to reach it, for there's a big river to cross. Follow the moon, and you won't miss it."

Buster thanked him for this information, and as there was a bright moon he had no trouble in keeping in the right direction. As on the previous night he traveled until the dawn of a new day, and then once more sought refuge in a dense swamp to sleep.

He was awake bright and early, rising before the moon was up. This time he asked Washer the Raccoon, who responded promptly:

"Follow the trail made by White Tail the Deer until you come to the river. Then cross it, if you can. It's a long swim, and I wouldn't like to undertake it."

Again Buster thanked his little forest friend, and resumed his hard journey. He was pretty tired and dirty by this time, for he had walked through swamps and thickets of briars in the dark, and had fallen and stumbled a number of times. But he had to reach the North Woods where he would be in no further danger of capture. Now that he had decided to return to his old home, he wasn't going to be turned aside by anything.

He reached the bank of the river by dawn. It was certainly a wide river, and very swift. He walked in it and drank his fill of cool, refreshing water. Seeing Billy the Mink washing himself on the bank, he called to him: "Must I swim the river to reach the North Woods, Billy?"

"You certainly must," laughed Billy, "unless you can fly across. You haven't wings yet, have you, Buster?"

"Not yet, Billy."

Then taking a plunge in the deep, swift stream, Buster began his long swim. The current was so strong that it carried him far down from the point he had in view, and at

times it seemed as if he wasn't making any headway at all. His long tramp in the woods began to tell on him, and he puffed and grunted as never before.

But he was a powerful swimmer, and in time his feet touched sandy bottom on the other side. He waded through the shallow water until he stood on dry land once more.

"My, Buster, you look like a drowned rat!" exclaimed a voice in the bushes. He turned to see Groundy the Woodchuck smiling at him. "When did you arrive?" continued Groundy. "And how big you've grown! I hardly knew you at first."

"How far am I from the North Woods, Brownny?" Buster interrupted.

"How far? Why, as far again as half."

"This is no time for joking, Brownny. I want a plain, straightforward answer."

"Well, then you'll have it. You're there now! You're standing in the North Woods!"

Buster gave a little sigh of relief. So he was back home, in the woods where had been born! How good the trees and bushes looked and smelt! He sniffed the pines and spruces. He looked at the river he had crossed, and for the first time realized this was the stream that passed the door of his old home. By following it up he could come to the cave where his

mother had lived, and where Loup the Lynx had found him that day when he tried to kill him.

If you want to hear more of Buster's life you can follow him in the book "Buster the Big Brown Bear's Adventures."

BOBBY GRAY SQUIRREL

BOBBY'S INTRODUCTION

There are many squirrels living in the North Woods, but only one real Bobby Gray Squirrel, and if you saw him once you would never mistake him for any other. Bobby was a gay, rollicking happy-go-lucky fellow, who believed in enjoying himself today and letting the morrow take care of itself. He wasn't exactly lazy, but he didn't believe in doing work that wasn't actually necessary, and sometimes, I'm afraid, he forgot to do what was really necessary.

Bobby had many friends in the woods, and they all liked him and smiled at him, but there were some who thought his careless ways might get him in trouble some day. So instead of chattering pleasantly with him, they shook their heads and preached to him.

"Why don't you get busy these pleasant days, Bobby, and store up food for the winter?" Gray Back the Weasel asked reprovingly one bright, sunny day.

The continuation of this interesting story will be found in

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WHITE TAIL THE DEER

STORY I

WHITE TAIL'S FIRST LESSON

High among the timberland of the North Woods White Tail the Deer was born, and if you had stumbled upon his home in the thickets you would have been surprised by a noise like the rushing of the wind, and then by a very remarkable silence that could almost be felt. The first was made by Mother White Tail as she deserted her young and took to quick flight.

White Tail, crouching low down in the bushes, so still that he scarcely moved a hair, would hide his beautiful head in the branches and leaves like an obedient child. Left alone he knew that his one chance of escape was not to move or whimper or cry.

That was the first lesson White Tail was taught by his mother — to keep absolutely quiet in the presence of danger. When he was so small that he could hardly hold up his head, she whispered to him: "Listen, White Tail! When I give the signal that the hunters are coming, you must flatten yourself down. The continuation of this interesting story will be found in

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Bumper the White Rabbit

STORY I

WHERE BUMPER CAME FROM

THERE was once an old woman who had so many rabbits that she hardly knew what to do. They ate her out of house and home, and kept the cupboard so bare she often had to go to bed hungry. But none of the rabbits suffered this way. They all had their supper, and their breakfast, too, even if there wasn't a crust left in the old woman's cupboard.

There were big rabbits and little rabbits; lean ones and fat ones; comical little youngsters who played pranks upon their elders, and staid, serious old ones who never laughed or smiled the livelong day; boy rabbits and girl rabbits, mother rabbits and father rabbits, and goodness knows how many aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces, cousins, second cousins and distant relatives-in-law! They all lived under one big roof in the

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WHITE TAIL'S ADVENTURES

STORY I

WHITE TAIL JUMPS STEPPING STONE BROOK

White Tail grew rapidly in size and strength, his long, clean limbs showing taut muscles and great springing power; and his neck grew thick and short, which is well for a buck, who must use it in savage thrusts when the head is a battering ram. His horns were short and bony, but they protruded in front like knobs against which it would be unpleasant to fall.

But his antlers were his pride. They spread out fan-shape on his head, crowning it with a glory that made Mother Deer supremely happy. At times it seemed as if the antlers were too heavy for the head and neck, but White Tail carried them easily, and when he shook them in sport or anger any one could see they were just fitted to him.

In time he stood as high as Father Buck, and a head taller than Mother Deer. The day the tip of his antlers reached an inch above Father Buck's, he felt a little thrill of pride.

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BUMPER THE WHITE RABBIT AND HIS FOES

STORY I

BUMPER PLANS TO FIGHT HIS ENEMIES

Now in the reign of King Bumper and Queen Fuzzy Wuzz many things happened in the woods that made exciting times for the wild rabbits and their friends. They came to pass in the first year of their reign, for Bumper the white rabbit was not content to be idle when his people were surrounded by so many enemies that their lives were never safe.

Some kings just eat and drink and make merry the live long day, and forget all about duty; but lots of such kings have lost their thrones, and others who have ruled wisely have been blessed with many friends, and when they died all the people mourned their loss.

Bumper the white rabbit intended to be a good and wise ruler, and therefore he spent much time in trying to think of ways to help his wild cousins of the woods. The story of how he escaped from the garden owned by the

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Bumper the White Rabbit In the Woods

STORY I

BUMPER HUNTS WITH THE PACK.

BUMPER the White Rabbit, when he escaped from Edith, the red-headed girl who owned the garden where he lived, found his way into the woods, and, after many adventures with the Bats, the Crow, the Fox and Buster the Bear, he was adopted by the wild rabbits as their leader and king. The Old Blind Rabbit welcomed him, and told the story of how it was prophesied that some day a pure white rabbit, with pink eyes, would come to deliver them from their enemies, and teach them how to live in the woods without fear of danger.

No one had been more surprised than Bumper at this sudden welcome. At first he was for telling them he was no leader, and not fit to be their king; but, as he was very lonely and without a

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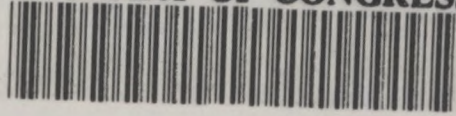
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